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*Vol. 1. 1. 1.*

# THE QUEEN'S COMRADE

The Life and Times  
of Sarah Duchess of  
Marlborough. By

JOHN G. BURNETT

Author of "*The Most Gorgeous  
Lady Blessington*," "*Court Life  
Below Stairs*," "*The Life and  
Adventures of Peg Woffington*"

WITH 18 PORTRAITS  
AND ILLUSTRATIONS

VOL. II

London

JOHN G. BURNETT, 10, N. 4TH ST.

NEW YORK, DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY

1901





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## CHAPTER I

COMPARED with its monstrous overgrowth in the present day, London was in the reign of Queen Anne a comparatively small and compact city. And this being an age before class distinctions became lost in a democratic mass, each section of society was marked by its dress and manner, and lived in its own quarter of the town. In this way the staid and busy tradesman, great merchants, and bankers, dwelt with their families above their shops or offices east of Temple Bar ; barristers, solicitors, and law students were to be found in and around the Temple ; the environs of Drury Lane were given over to the poor players and pamphleteers, the ready-witted writers of lampoons and satires, to singers and musicians, to those who penned comedies and tragedies, or indited fulsome praises to some proud patron.

In the vicinity of the Royal Palaces of Whitehall and St. James's lived the courtiers whose great mansions rose in the Strand or Piccadilly ; whilst persons of lesser distinction resided in Leicester Square, Covent Garden, or Bloomsbury, from whose new-built Queen's Square,

refreshing views might be had of the breezy hills of Highgate and Hampstead. The now dingy and depressing neighbourhoods of Theobald's Road, King's Cross, and Clerkenwell, were then wide-spreading fields with country lanes, and tree-sheltered farmhouses ; Edgware and Hampstead Roads numbered but a few houses that lay far apart ; footpads had their wicked haunts in the unkempt grass-grown spaces behind the site on which the British Museum now stands ; and for many years of Anne's reign, no other building stood between Devonshire House and the fields known as Hyde Park, which were protected by hedges and ditches and " a sorry kind of balustrade or rather with poles placed upon stakes, but three feet from the ground."

Kensington was considered at this time a suburb, and was not easy of access in wet weather from London, on account of the state of its roads, in whose deep ruts horses stumbled and coach wheels stuck, to the great danger of those who rode or drove. It had, however, been brought into fashion by King William, who considered its air beneficial to his chronic asthma, and who on his first coming to England had rented Holland House, before he bought from the Earl of Nottingham the residence afterwards known as Kensington Palace.

Though the London streets were dark and narrow, they could boast of a picturesqueness which the modern spirit with its desire for space and its aim at conventionality has destroyed. With high-pitched roofs, projecting stories, canopied doorways, and oak-beamed

fronts, the houses, weather beaten to harmonious hues, stood irregularly, jutting here and receding there all down the twisting thoroughfares. And at a time when glass had not come into common use, the shop fronts freely exposed their wares. Above them, hanging from carved and iron branches, swinging in wild weather and plentifully dripping in wet, were the signboards that often met in the centre of the street ; each exhibiting in all the bravery of bright paint and lavish gilding, the figure of some monstrous beast or fabled bird, a human head, some quaint design or strange conceit by which the shop it hung above was known to its customers and others.

And up and down these streets all day the criers went calling out or chanting their wares, rivalling each other in their noises, their accents proving their country origin in many cases. The woman with the white handkerchief loosely knitted over her russet gown, wide-stretching basket on her head, cried out ripe cherries and fair strawberries, sixpence a pound ; she, with the muslin cap fitting close to her brown face and tied under her full chin, sold bed-mats or door-mats, or good table baskets made by her own strong hands ; the youth, out at elbows and grown a size too large for his small clothes, sold pamphlets and news-sheets, amongst them being the *Daily Courant*, the first daily paper published in England, which came into life the same week that Anne came to the throne ; the little man in the russet coat with blue worsted stockings, was ready to mend brass or iron pots, or give good

money for old metal ; the thin dark person lean as a scholar, offered for sale Moore's or Partridge's almanacks, wax wafers, fine writing ink, long thread laces, and pretty pins for pretty maids. Others told of the virtues of New River water ; of lily-white vinegar threepence per quart ; of fat capons ; of oysters twelpence the peck ; of merry new songs or the full and true account of the latest execution ; of delicate cucumbers to pickle or asparagus ready for table ; all of which they were eager to dispose of, whilst their combined cries deafened the ear, like a chime of human bells.

Their clamours were often temporarily silenced as they were driven from the centre of the streets by the hackney coaches with their many-caped, whip-cracking, swearing drivers, by the grumbling chairmen labouring under the weight of their burdens at the rate of a shilling a mile, or by the carriages or coaches of men of quality, cumbrous vehicles painted and gilded, hung on leather straps, lined with blue or crimson velvet, and drawn by four or six horses. Beside these the common or hackney coaches made a poor appearance, with their worn out jades and their window-frames supplied with white canvas to keep out dust, or to shade from the sun, or with tin in which holes were pierced to admit air. The most common and comfortable mode of conveyance was the sedan chairs, though their carriers, a drunken brawling lot, were the terror of the town, ever ready with sulphurous language and clenched fists to dispute for the carrying of a fare, whom they not infrequently tumbled into the mud as they took

their unsober ways through the ill-paved and badly lit streets at night.

Their obscurity gave welcome opportunities to that large but unpopular class who found robbery a prosperous though perilous profession ; and also to the gang of young dare devils who, in 1712, swept like a plague through the town, drawing their swords or flourishing their tasselled canes to maim and bruise their helpless victims, out of sheer depravity, which they mistook for the exuberance of youth. These formidable gallants were known as the Mohawks, a name, says the *Spectator*, which they took "from a sort of cannibals in India, who subsist on plundering and devouring all the nations about them."

Against a body so formidable in numbers, so swift in their methods, the town watch—an easy-going, decrepit lot—made little resistance ; an early interference with the nightly amusements of the Mohawks resulting in certain disfiguring marks being left on the guardians of the peace. The way of these young bloods, explains a quaint publication, "is to meet people in the streets and stop them, and begin to banter them, and if they make any answer, they lay on them with sticks, and toss them from one to another in a very rude manner. They attacked the watch in Devereux Court and Essex Street and made them scower ; they also slit two persons' noses, and cut a woman in the arm with a penknife that she is lam'd. They likewise rowled a woman in a tub down Snow Hill, that was going to market, set other women on their heads," etc.

Swift amongst others considered the Mohawks a political party, whose design it was to assassinate the lord treasurer and punish the Tories. "It is not safe being in the streets at night for them," writes the Dean to Stella. "The Bishop of Salisbury's son is said to be of the gang. They are all Whigs; and a great lady sent to me, to speak to her father and to lord treasurer to have a care of them, and to be careful likewise of myself; for she heard they had malicious intentions against the ministers and their friends." On this the Dean took care not to walk late at night and went to the expense of hiring a chair; but he was advised by the lord treasurer not to be carried through the streets, "because the Mohocks insult chairs more than they do those on foot." He adds: "They think there is some mischeavous design in those villains. . . . Lord Winchelsea told me to-day at Court, that two of the Mohocks caught a maid of old Lady Winchelsea's at the door of their house in the Park, with a candle, and had just lighted out somebody. They cut all her face and beat her without any provocation."

That this was not exaggeration is proved by many other correspondents, among them Lady Wentworth, who, writing to her son Lord Raby, says: "I am very much frightened with a gang of Devils that call themselves Mohocks; they put an old woman into a hogshead and rooled her down a hill; they cut of some nosis, others hands, and several barbarss tricks without any provocation. They are said to be young gentlemen, they never take any money from any;



instead of setting fifty pounds upon the head of a highwayman, sure they would doe much better to sett a hundred upon their heads."

At certain times in each month when every moon was expected to do her duty, no efforts were made to light the thoroughfares : at other periods householders were obliged to hang out lanterns above their doorways. Oil lamps were also suspended from ropes crossing the streets, giving them a melancholy and uncertain gloom. In the fourth year of her reign Queen Anne was graciously pleased to grant letters patent for "enlightening the suburbs of London and city of Westminster and all other cities and places in England by new invented lights or lamps called conic lamps" ; whilst later on, in 1709, "a new sort of light called the Globe light" was invented, which "is observed to enlighten the street with a true steady light in no way offensive to the eye."

The first of these was seen at St. James's coffee house near St. James's palace, which Dean Swift used to frequent, and when the Irish post was due, give eager glances at the glass frame behind the bar, where letters were kept, to see if one waited him from the woman who loved him. In Queen Anne's reign there were over three thousand of these "places of convenience," or coffee houses, the forerunners of clubs, in London. By paying a penny, or twopence, or sixpence, according to their rank in the social scale, a man was free to enter one of these public resorts ; where he could sit as long as he pleased in the

enjoyment of a good fire or the company of his friends, read the news sheets, listen to the latest intelligence, the most diverting scandal, smoke, drink a glass of liquor, a dish of tea, or a cup of coffee.

At such places letters might be written and called for, business appointments made, and ardent youth might exchange simpers and bandy words with the maid selected for her charms who stood at the bar. Though all who paid the nominal fee might enter their hospitable doors, each coffee house had its own set of frequenters. At the Cocoa Tree, where besides tea and coffee, chocolate could be had at twelpence the quart or twopence the dish, the great Whig nobles congregated. Here was Lord Chancellor Somers, a bland and courteous peer, whom William had mightily favoured and who was detested by Anne. And with him most frequently came Lord Halifax, a politician of some merit, a versifier with a knack of making pretty ballads, the patron of poets who fed him on dedications, a lover of Italian music then lately introduced to the town, a gallant who with a frightful figure "followed several beauties who laughed at him."

Here also came my Lord Sunderland, husband of Lady Anne Churchill, who having succeeded to his father's title and estates, signalised that event by throwing out of the library the works of the Fathers of the Church, which he termed "the dregs of antiquity," and supplying their place with the writings of Machiavelli. As great a Whig as any, the Duke of Devonshire was likewise a constant visitor, a man

admired by many, for his presence was handsome, his dress of the richest, and his courage was such that, when insulted before royalty by Colonel Culpepper, he had boldly dragged that rash individual from the presence chamber and wrathfully caned him on the head, for which he was fined five thousand pounds. And amongst them, liveliest of all, was King William's close friend, Lord Wharton, who had the reputation of being the greatest rake in England, a man with a fine eye for horse flesh and a good head for a bottle, who Swift says, "was wholly occupied by vice and politics, so that bawdy, profaness, and business, filled up his whole conversation." Another ardent Whig who delighted to entertain his companions of the coffee house with stories of the late King, was the Earl of Ranelagh, who as he had ruined himself by his passion for building and his extravagances in gardening, had been appointed by William as superintendent of the royal edifices and pleasure grounds, and allowed to try his desecrating hand on Hampton Court Palace.

White's coffee house, not far removed from the Cocoa Tree, was frequented by the great Tory lords, such as the Queen's uncle, the Earl of Rochester ; Lord Jersey, now a sturdy Jacobite ; Lord Nottingham, who was Secretary of State under Anne, as he had been under William ; Sir Edward Seymour, erect and stately, haughty and sour, who was Comptroller of Her Majesty's household ; the Duke of Shrewsbury, her Lord Chamberlain, who from the suavity of his manners and graciousness of his bearing, was known

as the King of Hearts ; and the Duke of Buckingham, who, when Earl of Mulgrave, had made love to the Princess Anne when he was banished from the Court, but who eventually consoled himself by marrying her step-sister, Catherine Darnley, a natural daughter of James II. In memory of old times, as gossips said, Anne on coming to the Throne made him Lord of the Privy Seal, and raised him to a dukedom.

Child's coffee house in St. Paul's Churchyard was the resort of the clergy, who at this time held a much lower grade in social life than now ; and who—at the time when almost every nobleman kept his chaplain—were frequently treated with indignities, and occupied a place in their patron's household that was but little above the servants. It was usual at this time for the clergy to appear abroad in bands, cassock, gown, and wig ; and like the followers of less peaceable professions, their ranks were divided into factions, under the terms that in the previous reign had come into vogue, of high church and low church ; the former siding with the Tories and opposing dissent, whilst the low church party were more tolerant regarding dogmas, and less liberal concerning the prerogatives of the Crown. So that the soothing effects of tea and snuff did not always harmonise the gatherings at Child's coffee house, especially when the boisterous Bishop Trelawney was present. His lordship was one of the many concerning whom the scandal loving Bishop Burnet said ill things ; for he accused Trelawney of being drunk at Salisbury

in a certain inn on a given date, which the accused most forcibly denied. But if Dr. Trelawney, who was a baronet as well as a bishop, did not indulge in strong liquors, he certainly and habitually used strong language, a habit he always set down to the baronet as an excuse for the bishop, and found little satisfaction in the reminder and reproof of a God-fearing friend, that if the baronet would be damned, the same fate must befall the bishop.

Jonathan's coffee house in Exchange Alley was the favourite resort of stockjobbers, whilst Baker's close by was patronised by merchants. The Grecian, in Devereux Court, Temple, was thronged by lawyers and learned men, amongst whom was Sir Isaac Newton, and Dr. Douglas, who had the high honour of dissecting a dolphin before the Royal Society. But the Young Man's coffee house at Charing Cross, was perhaps the most fashionable of the day; for here "their tables were so very neat and shin'd with rubbing like the upper leathers of an alderman's shoes," and the floor as clean swept as if the owner "would impose the forfeiture of so much mop money upon any person that should spit out of the chimney corner."

This house was the favourite resort of the beau, who admired himself greatly, and gave himself extravagant airs. Wearing a full-bottomed periwig on which a cocked hat was set sideways, a neckcloth with fringed ends negligently tied, a red waistcoat woven with gold and open at the top to show a fine holland shirt, a camlet coat much embroidered, with

its skirts extended by wire or whalebone, silk stocking and buckled shoes with high red heels, he considered himself dressed to perfection. In winter he added a muff suspended round his neck by a ribbon, in summer he carried an amber-headed cane, whilst at all seasons a silver-hilted sword hung by his side.

Entering the coffee-house with a dainty step, he made a display of his Italian snuff-box whose lid contained a mirror for the satisfaction of his eyes, ordered wine which he sent back half a dozen times to show his excellent judgment, until the worst was brought him which he declared the best, smiled until his white teeth were admired by all, ignored all commoners if a noble lord were present, shook *billet doux* from his pocket as he drew out his scented handkerchief, consulted his gold watch with a frequency that spoke ill for his memory, quoted jests from the last new play which he spoiled by repeating, and boasted of his acquaintance with a noble duke who revealed to him the secrets of the Court, which upon his honour he dared not impart even to his best friends, because His Grace had bound him to secrecy.

Amongst all the fops that frequented this house, none wore braver apparel, none was more gallant than Robert Fielding generally known as handsome Fielding. A man of goodly shape and fascinating personality, he was the hero of a hundred intrigues before his career as a bachelor ended by his marrying the notorious Duchess of Cleveland, who for many years had swayed and plagued the Merry

Monarch's life. This marriage on Beau Fielding's part was mercenary ; for the Duchess was wealthy if ancient, and imprudent. Nor was she so generous as he expected, for seven months after they became man and wife, he broke open her desk and took four hundred pounds from it, and when she would have prevented him he beat her sadly. On that she put her head out of the window and cried " Murder," when a great and jeering crowd collected, at which the gallant Beau Fielding fired a blunderbus. The result was his wife had him committed to Newgate and bound him over to keep the peace.

It was at Button's coffee-house, in Russell Street, Covent Garden, that the wits and pamphleteers, the poets and satirists chiefly gathered. Here, amongst others, came the stately Joseph Addison, who having made the grand tour, returned to England about the time Anne came to the throne. Generally silent in company, he made an excellent listener, wrote his polished lines with toil, and drank good wine with relish, being grave and taciturn over the first bottle, gay and frolicsome with the second, and sick at the third, as Voltaire says. Made independent by his wife, widow of Edward Rich, Earl of Warwick, and by the Whigs who employed him, he could afford to write in elegant luxury for the *Guardian*, whose publication was devised at this house, and on whose front door was fixed a letter-box in the shape of a lion's head, designed by Hogarth, into which writers were invited to drop their contributions.

It was at this coffee-house that Addison so often met his friend Richard Steele, who though his parents were English, had been born in Ireland, a fact that seemed to account for his extravagant habits, fluent tongue, and that ready wit that ran like a golden thread through the core of his comedies. A Whig writer, like Addison, he was also a contributor to the *Guardian*. Prosperity smiled on him, patrons rewarded him, matrimony brought him riches, but his love of good living and gay company, his desire for display and general thriftlessness, often forced him into difficulties ; as may readily be imagined of a man, who after giving a guest an excellent dinner, spent the last half-guinea left to his family in sending out for a dessert which was unneeded.

As a further illustration of his character the story is told that once, when he had assembled a goodly company round his board, one of them asked why he kept so many liveried servants, on which he answered it was because he could not afford to dismiss them. "Why not?" said the questioner. "If you must know," answered Steele in great good humour, "they are bailiffs who have come here rather inopportunately, I own ; but that I might not lose the pleasure of your company or hurt your feelings, I put them into livery as you see." The guests were so pleased by this frank explanation that, rather than have so excellent a host hampered by bailiffs, they went bail there and then and the fellows were dismissed.



It was here also that Dr. Garth, physician and versifier, when lingering late over his wine one night, was asked by Steele if his patients would not need him, when the doctor had the honesty to reply that it did not matter in the least whether he saw them that night or next day; for nine had such bad constitutions that no physician could cure them, whilst the remainder had such good ones that all the doctors in the world could not kill them.

Here likewise came the poet, John Phillips, celebrated for his "pomp of diction"; and Nicholas Rowe, a gentleman out of Devonshire, well proportioned in his person, with elegant manners more *sauve* than sincere, who living in ease and comfort, wrote at his leisure such plays as *Jane Shore*, *Tamerlane*, and *The Fair Penitent*, and edited the first commodious edition of Shakespeare's plays, to which he prefixed a life of the poet which, to damn it with faint praise, was "more to be commended for the intention than the execution."

A frequenter of this coffee-house far more brilliant as a playwright and more winsome as a man, was William Congreve, who, graceful in his person, refined in his manner, witty and charming, had gained a reputation for good comradeship before he was out of his teens, and later by his brilliant comedies won the universal favour of the town. Adventurous and original, it was his delight to disguise himself beyond recognition, and live with low characters at Gravesend or Houndsditch, where he diverted himself by their ways, studied and reproduced them in his plays,

and told a hundred good stories of them to his companions.

Amongst these was Dean Swift, black browed and bitter tongued, hungering for church promotion, a writer of unapproachable satire, a follower of the Tories, and a man of genius. A frequenter of the Court he had been taught by William how to cut asparagus in the Dutch fashion and to eat it stalks and all; and was now waiting until it should please Her Majesty to appoint him to a bishopric, an ambition never destined to be fulfilled.

At Tom's coffee house, situated in the same street, high play and grim tragedy were not unknown; the one not unfrequently following the other, in these days when gambling was indulged in by all, from the Queen who was described as a "card-playing automaton," to the shoe-blacks stationed at Whitehall and St. James's Palaces, who were therefore known as the black-guards. The cards used were generally illustrated by scenes of memorable events, such as the flight of King James, the coming of the Prince of Orange, the burning of "mass houses," the coronation of Queen Anne. Sharpers, marked cards, and false dice were as plentiful as dupes; great sums were lost and won by the nobility, and the lower classes carried away by excitement, occasionally risked all they had; the invariable custom being to pay as soon as possible all debts of honour. When acting on these conditions, a young man from the university had parted with his waistcoat, coat, and shirt, and was

found at Tom's shivering in a corner, he was hailed by his friends with laughter, for, said they to him : " Who ever thought to see thee in a state of innocency ? " Something which he probably did not value so much as a suit of clothes, was also lost at cards by a person in Westminster, who in the first year of Queen Anne's reign, was indicted for " playing away his wife to another man, which was done with her own consent."

At the Bedford coffee-house in Covent Garden, most of the players might be found, telling many strange tales of the dire hardships common to their wandering lives, before merit brought them appointments to the patent houses ; or extolling their own talents as they boasted of victories won over sullen audiences, and of praises given by their patrons. Here, seated in an arm-chair drawn close by the fire in winter, and always surrounded by a group of attentive listeners, was a man with a broad face and small eyes, a corpulent body, thick legs, and large feet, who was none other than Thomas Betterton, the greatest actor in the days of Charles II., who had sent him to Paris to see the French theatres, and had appointed his wife a teacher of elocution to Mary and Anne. The latter bore kindly remembrances of him and had seen him perform since she came to the throne, for at the age of seventy-five he had appeared on the boards of the Queen's theatre in the Haymarket, just a few months before they carried him to his grave in Westminster Abbey, on May 2nd, 1710.

Dogget, a lively little Irishman, who was so famous

a player that he made about a thousand a year, and yet did not disdain to have a booth at Bartholomew fair, came to the Bedford "dressed neat and something fine, in a plain cloth coat and brocaded waistcoat," when he praised the Whigs and dammed the Tories as he was much interested in politics. And so highly was he estimated, that the managers of Her Majesty's theatre gave him "thirty pounds to act six times, which he did and filled the house each time," as Sir John Vanbrugh writes; this being, it may be added, the first instance of starring mentioned in the history of the English stage.

A favourite actor of my Lord Marlborough was young Estcourt, who once had been apprenticed to an apothecary; for which dull trade he had a loathing, whilst he loved the stage, for whose service nature had fitted him, his manner being easy and free whilst "he had the honour in comedy alway to loetificate his audience, especially the quality."

One of the quality who had become a player was Booth, who was closely related to an earl and was married to the daughter of a baronet. At the early age of seventeen he had run away from home and sought his fortune on the stage, at first in Dublin afterwards in London where, because of his family and his talents, he gained quick recognition from the town. Even more aristocratic in appearance than he, was Colley Cibber, the son of a sculptor, who would have gone to the university if he had not joined William's forces on their landing.

As there was no fighting to be done, he had left the army and joined the stage, where above all others on the boards, he excelled in his representations of simpering beaux and swaggering fops. The air with which he helped himself to snuff, his profound bow to my Lady Betty, his nice adjustment of a clouded cane, were pronounced inimitable ; whilst presently he added vastly to his reputation by writing witty comedies—clear mirrors of the times—in which he played parts that suited his perfections.

It was at the humble suggestion of Colley Cibber, that Her Majesty issued a proclamation against one of the worst nuisances of the playhouse. It was not only that the poor mummer had to contend for a hearing against the noisy footmen in the upper gallery, to which they were admitted free, and where they waited to attend their mistress's chair or call their master's coach ; against the orange wenches, who not only called their wares and rattled their pence, but conveyed love notes across the house from beau to belle during the performance ; or against the audible remarks of the powdered, scented, and brocaded youth, lolling in the side boxes and ogling the fair sex ; but he had also to suffer interruption from such of them as chose to crowd on the stage during the play, to loll against the side entrances, to call to each other, to comment audibly on the acting, or to spoil a scene by crossing the boards at the most critical moment.

To remedy this and much else, Anne issued a proclamation on January 17th, 1704, stating she

had given orders to the Master of the Revels, who then held the same position towards the stage as the Lord Chamberlain does now—and also to both companies of comedians acting in Drury Lane and Lincoln's Inn Fields, to take special care that nothing should be performed in either of the theatres contrary to religion or good manners, upon pain of her high displeasure and of being silenced from further acting. And being further desirous to reform all other indecencies and abuses of the stage, which had occasioned great disorders and justly given offence, she commanded that no person of what quality soever should go behind the scenes or come upon the stage, either before or during the acting of any play; that no woman be allowed to wear a mask in either of the theatres, and finally that no person should enter the house without paying the established price for his place.

This order met with such popularity that three days after its issue, the House of Lords offered its thanks to Her Majesty for "restraining the playhouses from immorality."

Unfortunately her orders were not obeyed, for two months later, in answer to complaints that had been made to her of many indecent, profane, and immoral expressions that are usually spoken by players and mountebanks contrary to religion and good manners, she once more commanded her Master of the Revels to take special care to correct such abuses. That this might be made more easy to him, the Queen ordered

that all stage players, mountebanks, and all other persons mounting stages, should bring their several plays, drolls, farces, interludes, dialogues, prologues, and other entertainments fairly written, to the said Master of the Revels at his office in Somerset House, to be perused and corrected and allowed under his hand.

The theatres in these days were small compact buildings, but dimly lit, save on great occasions such as the visits of royalty. As there were no footlights, the stage was indifferently illuminated by candles set in circular pieces of iron, and suspended by ropes and pulleys by which they were lowered between the acts and regularly snuffed. The pit was fitted with benches covered with green cloth but without backs, and was filled with members of the professions, who often sent their footmen to keep their places until the performance began. An amphitheatre rising under the first gallery, was occupied by persons of the best quality; tradesmen with their wives and daughters watched the play from the gallery; above their heads were the lacqueys; the side boxes were filled by beaux who wished to display their splendour, and ladies of the highest fashion. The play began at five o'clock in the afternoon during winter, and its attractions were always enhanced by entertainments or interludes of dancing and singing, and occasionally by the performances of dogs, acrobats, and conjurers: these being found as attractive as the acting of the famed Elizabeth Barry or the graces of Nance Oldfield.

The fact that gout made movement painful to the Queen, was probably the reason why she so seldom visited the theatre ; but that she enjoyed a good play was evident, for the actors of both houses were occasionally commanded to appear before her at the Court of St. James, when the tragedies or comedies of Shakespeare or Dryden were performed.

However, she far preferred sport to art, and in her younger days had been devoted to hunting. When increasing corpulency prevented her riding to hounds, she "gave herself the divertisement of hunting" in an open calash, in which she would sometimes ride above forty miles. Her Majesty's interest in horse flesh was so great that she had a residence at Newmarket, which she frequently visited, and where she kept racers under the superintendence of Tregonwell Frampton, known as the father of the turf, the oldest and cunningest jockey in England, who made as light of throwing away five hundred or a thousand pounds at a time, as another man would his pocket money ; and was as calm, cheerful, and unconcerned when he lost as when he won. Both the Queen and Prince George continually gave prizes of gold plate value a hundred guineas to be run for ; but whether her own horses ever won one of these is uncertain, though it is true she gained a prize at the York races worth fourteen pounds.



## CHAPTER II

The Duke of Marlborough's Ardent Letters to His Wife  
—The Victory of Blenheim—Rejoicings in London  
—Thanksgiving in St. Paul's—Procession of the  
Trophies of War—Substantial Rewards to per-  
petuate the Memory of Great Services—The Ancient  
and Royal Manor of Woodstock—Its Historic  
Associations—The building of Blenheim Palace—  
A Magnificent Miniature—The Prince of Wales and  
his Sister Anne—Proposals to invite the Electress  
Sophia to England—The Queen's Displeasure—  
Growing Estrangement between Her Majesty and  
Her Favourite—Complaints of a Cold Letter—The  
Duchess writes plainly—Lord Sunderland is made  
Secretary of State—The Victory of Ramillies—Fresh  
Rejoicings followed by New Favours to the Duke  
—The Duchess coldly thanks her Sovereign—  
Erection of Marlborough House—The Oak King  
Charles planted—The Queen humbly explains.



## CHAPTER II

**M**EANWHILE the Duke of Marlborough was commanding the allied armies abroad in the midst of almost insurmountable difficulties, that would have driven an ordinary man to despair. For he was not only obliged to plan great campaigns, fight battles, and endure weary marches, but to satisfy the Dutch deputies, to pacify mercenary and sluggish German princes and British ministers, to conciliate the jealousies of foreigners as well as of his own followers, to answer dispatches which poured in on him from every court in Europe, and to suffer fatigue and anxiety, fever and ague that brought insufferable headaches and dimness of sight in their train.

Anxious to share his troubles and care for his health, his wife had more than once asked permission to join him ; but this he would not hear of, at a time when he could not ensure her comfort or safety. However, though he might spend fourteen hours in the saddle or be racked by headache, he found time to write to her whom he usually terms "My dear soul." In one of his letters written in May, 1704, he says that one

of hers (which seems to have been unusually affectionate), had almost gone astray, and adds, "I would not for anything in my power it had been lost ; for it is so very kind that I would in return lose a thousand lives if I had them, to make you happy." In compliance with her wishes he had taken from his strong box the last note she wrote him and burnt it, but he asks permission to keep this, that he may have the pleasure of reading it often, and that it may be found amongst his belongings when he is dead ; for, he continues, "I do this minute love you better than I ever did in my life before. This letter of yours has made me so happy, that I do from my soul wish we could retire and not be blamed. What you propose as to coming over, I should be extremely pleased with ; for your letter has so transported me, that I think you would be happier in being here than where you are, although I should not be able to see you often. But you will see it would be impossible for you to follow me ; but love me as you do now, and no hurt can follow me. You have by this kindness preserved my quiet and I believe my life ; for till I had this letter, I had been very indifferent of what should become of myself."

All his correspondence express the same tender affection, and generally speak of his hopes of ending his days quietly with her, whilst he continually refers to the violent headaches that distract him.

It has been stated that since the days of the Crusades, Europe had never been so generally excited, so

expanded in force or movement, as now when the efforts of two allied forces were combined to crush the power of France. The feelings of the English nation may therefore be imagined on receiving news of the victory of Blenheim, which went far towards that end ; and the sentiments of France may be gauged when it is stated that a proclamation was published in that country making it unlawful to speak of the battle.

On the memorable day when it was fought, August 13th, 1704, the Duke of Marlborough had spent seventeen hours in the saddle; but no sooner was victory assured him, than tearing a slip of paper from his pocket book, he wrote a pencilled note to the duchess telling her "I have not time to say more, but to beg you will give my duty to the Queen, and let her know her army has had a glorious victory. M. Tallard and two other generals are in my coach, and I am following the rest. The bearer, my aide-camp, Colonel Parke, will give her an account of what has passed. I shall do it in a day or two by another more at large." This note on the back of which is a bill of tavern expenses, is preserved in the archives of Blenheim Palace.

When Colonel Parke had delivered this note to the duchess, he was ushered into the presence of the Queen, then living at Windsor, who was overcome with joy at the news, and anxious to present its bearer with the usual reward for such intelligence, of five hundred pounds ; but instead of this the gallant soldier, who was also a courtier, begged that Her Majesty

would give him her portrait, which she did with great good will.

On the day following that on which the victory was gained, the duke found time to write again to the duchess. "Before the battle was quite done yesterday," he says, "I writ to my dearest soul to let her know that I was well and that God had blessed Her Majesty's arms with as great a victory as has ever been known. For prisoners I have the Marshal de Tallard, and the greatest part of his general officers, above eight thousand men and near fifteen hundred officers. . . . As all these prisoners are taken by the troops I command, it is in my power to send as many of them to England as Her Majesty shall think fit for her honour and service. My own opinion in this matter is, that the Marshal de Tallard and the general officers should be sent or brought to Her Majesty when I come to England; but should all the officers be brought, it would be a very great expense and I think the honour is in having the marshal and such other officers as Her Majesty pleases. But I shall do in this as in all things that which shall be most agreeable to her. I am so very much out of order with having been seventeen hours on horseback yesterday and not having been able to sleep above three hours last night, that I can write to none of my friends. However I am so pleased with this action, that I can't end my letter without being so vain as to tell my dearest soul, that within the memory of man there has been no victory so great as this; and as I am sure you love me entirely well, you will be

infinitely pleased with what has been done, upon my account as well as the great benefit the public will have."

Four days later in another letter he tells his "dearest life" that if he could have such another victory "I should then hope we might have such a peace as that I might enjoy the remaining part of my life with you."

Bonfires, the ringing of Church bells, the drinking of much good wine and loyal toasts in taverns, debates in coffee houses, the writing of ponderous odes, the rejoicing of eager crowds in the thoroughfares, testified to the general joy: whilst Her Majesty decided to celebrate the victory by going in pomp and state to St. Paul's, there to make public thanksgiving.

Accordingly on the morning of September the 7th, 1704, the sky being clear, the air temperate, and the sun bright, the town was early astir and eager to see the royal procession which it was promised would be of extraordinary splendour. By eight of the clock, all the Knights of the most noble Order of the Garter, met in the Council Chamber of St. James's Palace, wearing their velvet robes and jewelled collars, and having been duly marshalled, betook themselves to their great coaches emblazoned with arms, each drawn by six horses, and started for the cathedral, it being then two hours from midday.

After them came the Knight Marshal with his gallant men on horseback; followed by the equerries and gentlemen ushers to Prince George; the women of the bedchamber to Her Majesty; the maids of honour; his Royal Highness's lords of the bedchamber; and

Her Majesty's ladies of the bedchamber ; all in the royal coaches drawn by six horses. After these followed the proud Duke of Somerset as Master of the Horse, with the Duke of Ormond as Captain of the Guards in waiting ; a detachment of the horse-grenadiers, Her Majesty's footmen, the yeomen of the guard, and then drawn by eight horses came the Queen's State Coach where she sat dressed in great splendour and wearing many jewels, her consort beside her, the Duchess of Marlborough, plainly dressed, and Lady Fretcheville, a lady of the bedchamber in waiting, seated in front of her, a troop of her horse guards closing this lengthy procession.

The streets through which it passed were lined by the militia of Westminster as far as Temple Bar, and from there to St. Paul's, by the City trained bands. From the windows and balconies of the houses hung rich tapestries and bright carpets ; chains of flowers crossed the thoroughfares, and on scaffolds stood the City companies in their gowns, each with bands of music that made great cheer. At Temple Bar the lord mayor in a crimson gown, and the sheriffs in their scarlet gowns, all brave men on horseback, awaited Her Majesty, on whose approach the lord mayor dismounted, made her a speech, and surrendered her his sword which she handed him back, when he carried it right proudly before her to the cathedral.

Having reached there, Her Majesty who was a trifle lame from gout, was assisted from her coach and received by her great officers of state, her nobility and privy





JOHN CHURCHILL, FIRST DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH.



councillors, and led by her husband and followed by the Duchess of Marlborough she was conducted to the choir where she sat on a throne opposite to the altar, Prince George beside her. Then a sermon was preached by the dean, prayers were said, and the *Te Deum* admirably well sung ; after which the Queen returned in the same order to St. James's, whilst the populace cheered lustily, and the great guns at the Tower and in St. James's Park volleyed and thundered.

The Duke of Marlborough still abroad, was received everywhere from the Danube to the Rhine with extraordinary enthusiasm, and honoured by princes and potentates, the Emperor of Austria creating him Prince of Us and of the Holy Roman Empire : whilst he was received in Berlin with almost royal honours. Writing from that city on November 29th, 1704, Lord Raby says the duke was regaled in an extraordinary manner there, the King, his Court, the ministers and people of all degrees striving to express the great satisfaction they had in seeing His Grace at Berlin. " His Majesty besides lodging and entertaining the Duke and his attendants in the Hotel des Ambassadeurs, gave His Grace very noble presents, as a hat with diamond button and loop, and a diamond hatband valued at between twenty and thirty thousand crowns, and two fine saddle horses out of his stables with very rich furniture, besides several other marks of his bounty and generosity. . . . His Grace has given great satisfaction here with that affable obliging behaviour which answers all his other extraordinary qualifications, and

he is extremely contented with this Court and the success he has had in his negotiations, which will appear to be much for the advantage of the common cause."

However gratifying these honours must have been, they could hardly have compensated for the fatigues he had suffered during the recent campaign. In writing to his old friend Lord Godolphin, he says that nothing but his zeal for Her Majesty's service could have enabled him to endure the hardships of the last three months, and that he is sure he looks ten years older than when he left England. Nor does he say this in complaint for, he adds "I esteem myself very happy if I can make any return for Her Majesty's goodness to me and mine."

Made anxious by his constant reports of ill health and fearful lest prolonged strain might cause a complete collapse, the duchess begged him to retire from the army and live in peace in their home. In reply to a proposal that so much agreed with his own inclinations he answered, "What you say of St. Albans is what from my soul I wish, that there or somewhere else we might end our days in quietness together; and if I consider only myself, I agree with you, I can never quit the world (retire) in a better time; but I have too many obligations to the Queen to take any resolution, but such as her service must be first considered. I hope however in a little time all this business may be so well settled, as I may be very easily spared, and then I shall retire with great

satisfaction, and with you and my children end my days most happily ; for I would not quit the world, but be eased of business, in order to enjoy your dear company."

On his way to the Moselle and when eight leagues from Treves, he wrote once more, but in a state of depression, as two sentences will show, and at the same time prove the small value he at this time set upon the world's judgment. "This march" he says "and my own spleen have given me occasion to think how very unaccountable a creature man is, to be seeking for honour in so barren a country as this, when he is very sure that the greater part of mankind, and may justly fear that even his best friends, would be apt to think ill of him—should he have ill success. But I am endeavouring all I can to persuade myself that my happiness ought to depend upon my knowledge that I do what I think is for the best."

After various minor successes, the duke returned to England, to reap some of the rewards of the great victory. Crossing from Holland in one of the royal yachts he sailed up the Thames amidst vociferous cheering, every vessel flying its flag, and landed at Whitehall steps on December 14th, 1704. Here he was met by the duchess, their daughters and sons-in-law, with several friends, and was conducted to St. James's Palace where the Queen and Prince George received him with the utmost friendliness. News of his arrival spread through the town and crowds gathered in the streets to catch sight of the hero of

Blenheim ; whilst little else but his achievements was talked of in the taverns and coffee houses.

Next day he went to the House of Lords where he was presented with a congratulatory address ; whilst a committee of the House of Commons waited on him to express their thanks for his glorious services. In his answers to both he showed a characteristic modesty, claiming little merit for himself, but saying that next to the blessing of God he owed his success to the extraordinary courage of the officers and soldiers under his command. A glimpse of the kindly and simple manner of the man whom the greater part of Europe was combining to honour at this time, is given by John Evelyn, who tells us that he waited on Lord Godolphin and there found "the victorious Duke of Marlborough, who came to me and took me by the hand with extraordinary familiarity and civility, as formerly he used to do, without any alteration of his good nature. He had a most rich George in a sardonyx, set with diamonds of very great value ; for the rest very plain. I had not seen him for some years and believed he might have forgotten me."

On January 3rd, 1705, the trophies of the victory which had been temporarily placed in the Tower, were removed to Westminster Hall, in a triumphal procession, amidst the wild enthusiasm and ringing cheers of the people who pressed from all quarters to see them. An impressive pageantry accompanied these conquests, headed by prancing horse guards, by regiments of foot guards, by a cavalcade of the

highest nobles in the land, and followed by a hundred and twenty-eight pikemen each carrying a standard. Artillery thundered, the swaying multitude were mad with joy, as this glittering parade took its way through the streets and the Green Park, where it was viewed by the Queen and the Duchess of Marlborough; for not since the days of the Spanish Armada had such an ostentatious spectacle delighted the public.

Three days later the duke attended a great entertainment given him by the lord mayor and heads of the city at the Goldsmiths' Hall. His progress there was almost royal in its state and reception; for he drove in one of Her Majesty's carriages attended by the Lord Treasurer, the Master of the Horse, and the Prince of Hesse, and followed by a numerous train of coaches in which were foreign ministers, generals, and men of the first rank. Not only were the streets through which he passed, thronged by those eager to catch a glimpse of him, but windows and roofs were crowded by those who lustily cheered him. At Temple Bar he was met by the City Marshals, and conducted to the hall where a great feast was spread, and where presently the hero of the hour heard his praises sounded in phrases that must have quickened his heart.

Whilst these public demonstrations were being continued, the Queen always generous, desired that the duke should receive some substantial reward from the nation. But remembering how her wishes to endow his heirs had been thwarted the previous

year, she thought it best that the suggestion of a recompense should come from the representatives of the people. Nor had she long to wait for this, for on January 11th, 1705, the Commons presented an address to Her Majesty, asking her to consider the means proper for perpetuating the memory of the great services rendered the country by the Duke of Marlborough.

The Queen returned a formal answer that she would give their desire her consideration, and later sent a message to the House saying "that she was inclined to grant the honour and manor of Woodstock to the Duke of Marlborough and his heirs for ever, and that she desired the assistance of the House to effect it." A more noble or gracious gift could scarce be selected to reward the greatest achievement; for Woodstock with its ancient manor and leafy glades was not only royal property, but had historic associations of both the Plantagenet and Tudor Sovereigns; for the Black Prince had been born there, it was the scene of Fair Rosamund's tragedy, and the sometime residence of Elizabeth.

In accordance with Her Majesty's wishes and without any opposition a Bill was passed by both Houses on March 14th, 1705, giving this ancient and royal domain to John Duke of Marlborough and his heirs for ever, on the condition that the possessor should present to the Queen and her successors "a standard or colours with three flowers-de-luce painted on them, for all manner of rent and services." Anxious to prove her



personal gratitude in addition to that of the nation, Her Majesty gave an order to the Board of Works to erect at her expense a splendid palace to be known—in commemoration of the victory—as the Castle of Blenheim. Plans for this were submitted by Sir Christopher Wren to Lord Godolphin who highly approved of them, but the building was eventually entrusted to Sir John Vanbrugh the architect, playwright, and friend of many good men, who was then employed in erecting Castle Howard for Lord Carlisle.

Vanbrugh earnestly desired to preserve the ancient royal residence at Woodstock, a picturesque building with ivy-covered walls, corner towers, a quadrangle court, and a gate-house, that stood on an elevated spot, surrounded by woods and overlooking the river Glynn; but the duchess, who had no romance in her nature, no reverence for ancient things, no delight in historic legends or associations, would not allow it to form part of the new building, or even to remain where it stood as an object of interest and beauty that would add to the view from the palace about to be built; and was not satisfied until every stone of it, including its ancient chapel, was pulled down, and its materials “made use of for things that were necessary to be done”; her chief reason for this piece of vandalism being, that its preservation would be a useless expense.

The foundation stone of Blenheim Palace was laid at six o'clock on the afternoon of June 18th, 1705. From the account given in the news sheets of the day, neither the Duke nor Duchess of Marlborough

seem to have been present. Seven gentlemen, we read, flung down a guinea each, and then struck the foundation stone which was eight feet square, was finely polished, and had inlaid on it in pewter, the words "In memory of the Battle of Blenheim June 18, 1705, Anna Regina." When this ceremony was over, festivities followed. "There were about a hundred buckets, bowls, and pans filled with wine, punch, cakes and ale. From my lord's house all went to the Town Hall, where plenty of sack, claret, cakes, etc., were prepared for the gentry and better sort; and under the Cross eight barrels of ale with abundance of cakes were placed for the common people. There were several sorts of musick, three morris dances, one of young fellows, one of maidens and one of old beldames."

Though in later years, and with what must be politely termed her frequent inaccuracy, the duchess was pleased to say in a letter written to Mr. Hutchinson, that "the Queen never did a generous thing of herself"; yet a fresh proof of Her Majesty's bounty and kindness was given to Her Grace at this time, when as a souvenir of the victory of Blenheim, Anne had a miniature portrait of the Duke painted on ivory, covered with a diamond of the purest water, cut with a table surface, framed with brilliants, and valued at eight thousand pounds, which she presented to the duchess.

Whilst Marlborough was being loaded with favours, he was not forgetful of the exiled claimant to the

throne, and the Stuart papers state that he continued to make secret professions and protestations of zeal to King James's son. A short time after his return to London, His Grace invited himself to sup with his sister-in-law the Duchess of Tyrconnel, then paying a short visit to town. Ardent in her advocacy of the Prince of Wales, she reminded the duke of his former promises and questioned him regarding his future intentions; but always cautious he answered her merely in general terms. Not satisfied with this she insisted on his coming to particulars, when he solemnly assured her that without entering into circumstances or fixing time, he would do everything which honour or justice demanded for the Prince. Lord Godolphin had likewise given proof of his zeal to the Queen over the water, by promising that as Lord Treasurer, he would seek an opportunity to pay part at least of the long arrears of her jointure.

Though Queen Anne had been obliged to agree to the settlement of the Crown on the House of Hanover at her death, she frequently thought of her unfortunate brother, and it was believed that, could she have carried out her wishes, she would have endeavoured to appoint him as her successor. In this year 1705, a miniature portrait of him was secretly conveyed to her, on seeing which she kissed it fondly and burst into tears; for the features before her not only resembled those of her family, but forcibly reminded her of her son the Duke of Gloucester, at

whose death she had written promises to her father, which in dying he recalled to her, and that she had made no effort to fulfil.

In this same year her sympathies with her brother and her dislike of the House of Hanover were plainly exhibited. The Parliament, which had sat for near three years, was according to the Triennial Act passed in the last year of William's reign, near its expiration ; when Anne, who was exacting and jealous of all the privileges of royalty, dissolved Parliament and so preserved the ancient prerogative of the Crown. When it reassembled in October, the Whigs were greatly in the majority. As already stated the Queen by education and inclination was led to dislike the predominating party ; and since the beginning of her reign her favour and patronage of the Tories had been a source of contention between herself and her favourite who was an ardent Whig. Party spirit now divided the Court, the town, and the country into factions whose violence seems incredible in modern times ; for not only did men write pamphlets, fight duels, and besmear each other's honour in the bitterness of their political ardour, but women ever immoderate in their enthusiasms, distinguished themselves by wearing patches on one side of their face or the other, according to the section they followed, that their sentiments might be seen at a glance

The feelings of the Tories on being thrown out of power may be imagined. To regain it they were prepared to take any steps no matter how inconsistent

with their principles, which they were ready to sacrifice in order to gain their ends. Their first effort was to raise a cry of alarm that the Church was endangered by the rule of the dissenting and republican Whigs ; and to save it the Tories so far forgot their Jacobite leanings as to suggest that the Princess Sophia of Hanover, the next heir to the Crown should reside in England ; it being argued that, although her highness was a Lutheran, her presence would in some mysterious manner protect the Church from its enemies, The Tories also knew that this measure was so objectionable to the Queen that she would never forgive the Whigs if they supported it ; whilst they believed the nation would decry the same party if they opposed it ; so that between two stools they must come to the ground.

The proposal to invite the Princess Sophia to England was mooted by Lord Haversham, whose intemperate language had caused the House of Commons to threaten him on one occasion with prosecution, and was supported by the Duke of Buckingham and the Earls of Rochester and Nottingham. The Queen who deeply resented this suggestion, had gone to the gallery of the House of Lords that she might listen to the debates on this subject, and perhaps temper their bitterness by her presence ; but her mortification was intense when she heard Lord Nottingham urge as an argument for inviting over the Princess Sophia, who was then in her seventy-sixth year—"that the Queen might live till she did not

know what she did, and be like a child in the hands of others."

In order to oppose their political enemies and gain the favour of Her Majesty, the Whigs declared it was best for the security of the Crown and the safety of the nation that the heir presumptive should be in entire dependence on the reigning sovereign; and that the rivalry which must arise between the two courts would only create animosity between different parties and involve them in disputes. The Queen was so incensed by the Tories and so grateful to the Whigs, that in a moment of impetuosity she wrote to the duchess saying, "I believe dear Mrs. Freeman, and I shall not disagree as we have formerly done; for I am sensible of the services those people have done me that you have a good opinion of, and will countenance them, and am thoroughly convinced of the malice and insolence of them that you have always been speaking against."

But instead of all disagreements ending between the Queen and the duchess, they rapidly increased, until the close friendship that had bound them from youth was finally sundered for ever. This was chiefly effected by the duchess's inordinate sense of her own importance since her husband's victory of Blenheim and the honours that followed, as well as from the fact that her supreme ascendancy over her royal mistress, was unwilling to tolerate Her Majesty's political opinions and sympathy for her brother, which happened to differ from her grace's sentiments.

Amongst the general causes for this growing alienation was the particular instance of the appointment to office of Charles, Lord Spencer, who on the recent death of his father had become third Earl of Sunderland ; for the duchess desired that her son-in-law should hold a place of trust and profit under Government, whilst the Queen had an aversion to a man—who Lord Dartmouth says “was universally odious”—because of his republican principles, and his opposing her wishes of continuing her consort in his offices, in case he survived her.

Added to this, Her Majesty was unwilling to oust Sir Charles Hedges from his office as Secretary of State, which it was the duchess's determination should be filled by her son-in-law. She had already induced the Queen to take the Great Seal from Sir Nathan Wright and give it to Sir William Cowper, a dissenter and a Whig whom Her Majesty looked on with suspicion ; but this fresh suggestion was not so graciously received. Nor did the Duke of Marlborough, who had little regard for his son-in-law, favour this design. Though the extreme Tories had given his grace many causes of mortification by hampering his plans, complaining that he had exceeded the limits of his instructions, and the responsibilities of a subject, in order to promote his own interests, yet the duke had without breaking with them, endeavoured to conciliate the moderate and liberal members on both sides, and tranquillise all by his own calm views and wise counsels.

But in the midst of worries and fatigues, whilst

continuing his campaign abroad, he received letters from the Queen, the Lord Treasurer, the Speaker, and the duchess asking advice, making complaints, claiming his interference, until he was oftentimes driven distracted. The impetuosity and intolerance so strongly characteristic of his wife were at variance with his gentleness and toleration; and she continually not only carped at the Tories and lauded the Whigs, but upbraided him with taunts and sarcasms that wounded a nature far finer and more sensitive than her own. In one of his answers to her written on August 3rd, 1705, he says :

“I received yours of the 17th yesterday, in which you complain of me having writ a cold letter, which you think may be occasioned by one I had then received from you. It is most certain that upon many occasions I have the spleen and am weary of my life; for my friends give me much more uneasiness than my enemies. But for you, my dearest life, I love you so well, and have placed all my happiness in ending my days with you, that I would venture ten thousand lives to preserve your good opinion. You sometimes use the expression of my ‘tory friends.’ As I never will enter into party and faction, I beg you will be so kind and just to me as to believe that I have no friends but such as will support the Queen and government.”

In another letter written three weeks later he assures the duchess that when he differs from her, it is not that he thinks those are in the right whom she says are always in the wrong: but it is that he would not enter



into the unreasonable reasoning of either party, for he had enough to contend with in carrying out his duties.

But he still continued to be besieged by correspondence whose reports and rumours and complaints distressed him ; so that he declares it is terrible to suffer so much uneasiness. As to parties, he thinks both are in the wrong ; but that the Queen had no choice but to employ or put in office those who would carry on the war, in other words the Whigs ; otherwise everything would go wrong. He states that the jealousy and suspicion he has to endure make him so weary, that if it were not for his gratitude and concern for Her Majesty, he would retire and serve no more. "For I have had the good luck to deserve better from all Englishmen," he adds, "than to be suspected for not being in the true interest of my country, which I am in, and ever will be, without being of a faction. And this principle shall govern me for the little remainder of my life. I must not think of being popular, but I shall have the satisfaction of my going to my grave with the opinion of having acted as became an honest man. And if I have your esteem and love, I should think myself entirely happy."

Knowing the influence he had with the Queen, his wife forwarded Her Majesty this communication, and at the same time wrote her a letter remarkable for its freedom and force, as well as valuable in showing the strain which their friendship suffered at this time, October 1706.

The statement in the duke's letter that the Queen

had no choice but to employ those who would carry on the war, gives the keynote to the duchess's angry feelings ; for the Whigs were in favour of continuing a campaign to which the Tories were opposed as being a drain on the nation for which it made no return ; and Her Majesty who was of their opinion had only a short while before written to the duchess saying she "had no ambition after the King of Spain was settled on his throne, but to see an honourable peace, that whenever it pleases God I shall dye, I may have the satisfaction of leaving my poor country and all my friends in peace and quiet."

Such a sentiment as this seemed to call for castigation by the duchess, who as even her friend Bishop Burnet admits, was "violent and sudden in her resolutions and impetuous in her way of speaking." That she was impetuous in her way of writing will also be seen. In addressing the sovereign on this occasion, she says

"I must in the first place remind you of the name of Mrs. Morley, and of your faithful Freeman, because without that help I shall not be well able to bring out what I have to say, 'tis so awkward to write anything of this kind in the style of an address, tho' none I am sure ever came from a purer heart, nor can be the tenth part so serviceable to you, if you please—because they are generally meant for compliment, which people in Mrs. Morley's post never want, though very often it turns to their own prejudice.

"What I have to say is of another nature ; I will

tell you the greatest truths in the world, which seldom succeed with anybody so well as flattery.

"Ever since I received the enclosed letter from Mr. Freeman, I have been in dispute with myself whether I should send it to Mrs. Morley or not, because his opinion is no news to you, and after the great discouragements I have met with—only for being faithful to you—I concluded it was to no manner of purpose to trouble you any more. But reading the letter over and over and finding that he is convinced he must quit Mrs. Morley's service if she will not be made sensible of the condition she is in, I have at last resolved to send it to you, and you will see by it, how full of gratitude Mr. Freeman is by his expressions, which were never meant for Mrs. Morley to see. He is resolved to venture his life and fortune, whenever it can be of any use to you, and upon recalling everything to my memory, that may fill my heart with all the passion and tenderness I had once for Mrs. Morley, I do solemnly protest I think I can no ways return what I owe her, so well as being plain and honest. As one mark of it, I desire you would reflect whether you have never heard that the greatest misfortunes that has ever happened to any of your family, has not been occasioned by having ill advice and an obstinacy in their tempers."

This was indeed a mark of plainness and honesty such as probably no subject had ever before given to a monarch. But more in the same strain follows.

"Though 'tis likely nobody has ever spoken

thoroughly to you on those just misfortunes, I fear there is reason to apprehend there is something of this in the case of Mrs. Morley, since she has never been able to answer any argument or to say anything that has the least colour of reason in it, and yet will not be advised by those that have given the greatest demonstrations imaginable of being in her interest. I can remember a time when she was as willing to take advice, and loved those that spoke freely to her, and that is not five years ago, and is it possible that when you seriously reflect, that you can do the business upon your hands without it? Can flatteries in so short a time have such a power? Or can you think it is safer to take advice from those you have little or no experience of, than of those who have raised your glory higher than was ever expected? And let people talk what they please of luck, I am persuaded that whoever governs with the best sense, will be the most fortunate of princes.

"I am sure this letter will surprise Mrs. Morley, who I believe was in hopes she had got quite rid of me, and should never have heard from me again on any such subject; but instead of that I have ventured to tell you, you have a fault. There is no perfection in this world, and whoever will be honest upon that subject, does one in Mrs. Morley's circumstances more service, than in venturing a hundred lives for her; and if I had as many, I am sure I could freely hazard them all to convince her (though I am used as I don't care to repeat) that she never had a more faithful servant."

Her Majesty's reply if ever written, has not been discovered, but the effects of this letter and another equally forcible, both printed by the duchess in the Account of her Conduct, may be gauged by a sentence or two penned by Lord Godolphin to her grace. "You chide me for being touched with the condition in which I saw the Queen," says he. "You would have been so too, if you had seen the same sight as I did." Eventually the duchess gained her desire regarding her son-in-law; for her partisans having entered into a cabal against Sir Charles Hedges, he resigned his post as Secretary of State, when Lord Sunderland was appointed in his place on December 3rd.

It may be mentioned here that Lord Sunderland's appointment was strongly opposed by the other Secretary of State, Robert Harley, "whose interest and secret transactions with the Queen were then doubtless in their beginning," writes the wrathful duchess. "This man," as she terms him, had shown such ability that he had been three times elected Speaker of the House of Commons before holding his present post. Although bred a dissenter, he was in politics a moderate Tory. His natural eloquence brightened by wit and humour, his genial temper and pleasant conversation, made him generally popular. But from the time he opposed the Duchess of Marlborough's views, she regarded him with an aversion that cost her far more than at this time she would have believed possible.

Before Lord Sunderland's appointment was made,

his father-in-law had won the great victory of Ramillies which had placed his skill and courage at a much higher point than ever in the eyes of Europe. In a letter dated May 24th, 1706, which he wrote to announce the event to his wife, the great general and affectionate husband said, "I did not tell my dearest soul in my last, the design I had of engaging the enemy if possible to a battle, fearing the concern she has for me, might make her uneasy ; but I can now give her the satisfaction of letting her know that on Sunday last we fought, and that God Almighty has been pleased to give us a victory. I must leave the particulars to this bearer, Colonel Richards, for having been on horseback all Sunday, and after the battle marching all night, my head aches to that degree that it is very uneasy for me to write. Poor Bingfield holding my stirrup for me and helping me on horseback was killed. I am told that he leaves his wife and mother in a poor condition. I can't write to any of my children, so that you will let them know I am well, and that I desire they will thank God for preserving me. And pray give my duty to the Queen and let her know the truth of my heart, that the greatest pleasure I have in this success is, that it may be a great service to her affairs ; for I am sincerely sensible of all her goodness to me and mine. Pray believe me, when I assure you, that I love you more than I can express."

The Queen, who was at Windsor when the news reached her, at once wrote to the duke telling him she wanted words to express her sense of the vast service

he had done his country, and begging that he would take great care of himself. This victory excited as much pride and enthusiasm as that of Blenheim, much to the satisfaction of the Whigs. Addresses and congratulations were offered Her Majesty ; praise of the great general was universal, and another thanksgiving held at St. Paul's, the whole ceremony being "performed with great decency," says Narcissus Luttrell in his "Diary of State Affairs." According to the same quaint account, "there was a greater number of the nobility attended than ever was known upon such an occasion ; the Dutchesse of Marlborough and Countesse of Burlington were in the coach with Her Majestie, the prince not there, being unable to endure the fatigue ; the guns in the park were discharged when she left St. James's, the streets lined by the train'd bands, and the several companies of this citty in their livery gouns, and the houses crowded with spectators."

The return of the "wise and valiant general" to London on November 18th, 1706, was the signal for an outburst of enthusiasm by the public. Both houses of parliament congratulated him on a success "that no age can equal"; and later the House of Lords requested Her Majesty to perpetuate his memory by continuing his titles and honours in his posterity, and solicited that she would be pleased to indicate in what manner they should be limited. In reply the Queen expressed her desire to have them extended to his daughters and their heirs male in succession, and recommended that the Manor of Woodstock

with the house of Blenheim should always descend with the title.

Hearing this the duke, after thanking the peers for their intention, said he had made an humble request to the Queen and would also to their lordships, that the Manor of Woodstock with the house of Blenheim should go with the title after the Duchess of Marlborough's death, on whom they were settled in jointure. This request was granted, and five thousand a year settled in perpetuity on his heirs. For these benefits the duchess thanked the Queen with a studied coldness and formality that must have surprised her. "Whether I have or have not the honour to see Your Majesty," she wrote, "I find there must always be something which obliges me to return you my humble thanks. The concern I have in the settlement made to Lord Marlborough's family by Act of Parliament, makes a necessity of my giving you the trouble of them upon this occasion ; and though it is not natural to me to make you so many fine speeches and compliments as some others can do, yet nobody has a heart fuller of the sincerest wishes for your constant happiness and prosperity than your poor forsaken Freeman."

The tone of the above is explained by the indorsement which the copy bears, by the writer, who says, "This letter to the Queen shows that I did not omit taking any reasonable occasion to please her, even when I saw she was changed to me ; for it is certain she never took any care of me in the settlement ;



and if I am ever the better for it, it is not owing to her friendship. But whatever the world said of my behaviour to her, I never failed in performing all manner of decencies and faithful services to her whilst it was possible for me to do it."

A further token of the royal favour was given to the duchess at this time. She had long desired to have a town residence worthy of her position, and had selected for its site a house standing in St. James's Park close by the royal palace, formerly occupied by the chaplains of Catherine of Braganza, wife of Charles II., and known as the Friary. On leaving England for Portugal, the Queen Dowager had given this residence to the Comtesse de Royer during Her Majesty's lifetime; but when this ended in 1707, the duchess again applied for the site, a grant of which was given her for fifty years, together with a portion of what had once been the royal pleasure garden. The old house was quickly pulled down, and on its site arose the handsome structure of red brick and white stone now known as Marlborough House. Its architect was Sir Christopher Wren, and its cost was between forty and fifty thousand pounds, but then, says the duchess "it is the strongest and best house that ever was built."

An incident in connection with its erection gave great offence to all lovers of the Stuart family; for in clearing the grounds for its site, a young oak was cut down which had sprung from an acorn plucked by Charles II. shortly after his restoration, from that

famous tree at Boscobel in which he had hidden from his pursuers. He had planted this in his private garden, where he had proudly marked its growth from year to year, and its removal by the duchess was repaid by the town by many bitter lampoons directed against her. It is evidently in reference to one of these, that Peter Wentworth in writing to his brother Lord Raby, says, "I have now sent you the verse of the Garden Plot, which I had heard talk't of with rude application, but cou'd not meet with before. The house is to be built after the model of the Duke of Bucks, upon which account there is struck up a greatest friendship where there has lately been a coolness, the said Duke and Dutchess with her Grace of Marlborough visset their work very often together. But since the *Tatler* has put out advertisement, that he's a printing a choise collection of Latin sentences for the benefitt of Mason and Builder, may be his Grace will stay till he sees them come out, before he resolves of any to be fix upon this new building, of which he's the chief architect."

Meantime, the duchess's influence with Her Majesty was gradually decreasing, the breach between them was made wider not only by Her Grace's censure of the Tories, but by her arbitrary manner which carried independence to rudeness, and by letters which outstrip the courtesy not only due from subject to sovereign but from friend to friend. A dispute regarding Church patronage added at this time to the estrangement between them; for the Queen, always anxious

to support her prerogatives, desired to fill the vacant dignities in the Church, whilst the duchess was of opinion that power should be entrusted to the Keeper of the Seals, Sir William Cowper who was willing to wrest that privilege from Her Majesty. In reply to a remonstrance written by the duchess on this subject, the Queen gave it as her humble opinion that the Crown could never have too many livings at its disposal, and though it occasioned her some trouble, it was a power she did not think reasonable to part with. "You wrong me very much in thinking I am influenced by some you mention (the Tories) in disposing of Church preferments. Ask those whom I am sure you will believe, though you won't me," says this Sovereign lady, "and they can tell you I never dispose of any without advising with them (the Whigs) and that I have preferred more people upon others' recommendations than I have upon his that you fancy to have so much power with me."

In former times, when the Queen and the duchess parted for a day or two, the former had written to express her longing for a sight of her friend ; but now her grace's more and more frequent absences from Court brought no expressions of regret, no requests from her royal mistress to return.

And though Her Majesty had formerly penned notes to her favourite four times a day, she now left the duchess's letters unanswered for a week. "I am made sensible that you were in a great disposition to complain of me," writes the duchess to her Queen,

and again she says, "I beg Your Majesty's pardon for not waiting upon you, and I persuade myself that long as my letter is, it will be less troublesome to Your Majesty."

Up to this time her grace's implicit belief in her power over her Sovereign slave, blinded her to the immediate and personal cause of their ever-widening estrangement; but she was soon to learn who it was that had gradually crept into that place in the royal favour which, deeming it her own undisputed monopoly, she had wilfully neglected to guard.

### CHAPTER III

Admiral George Churchill is suspected by the Duchess—Abigail Hill and Her Family—The Queen's Friendship for Her Bedchamber Woman—A Design "deeply laid"—Abigail's Secret Marriage—The Queen's takes her Furtive Way to Dr. Arbuthnot's Lodgings—The Duchess hears of It—Expostulates with the Sovereign—Writes to the Duke—Explanatory Letter from Her Majesty—Influence of Robert Harley—Extraordinary Letter from the Duchess to Her Majesty—Abigail writes to Her Kinswoman—The Queen's Affectionate Note—Abigail's Marriage is acknowledged—Two Unions Which divert the Town—The Queen thinks Abigail mightily in the Right—Abigail visits the Duchess—A Woman raised from the Dust—Her Grace's Anger with Abigail—The Queen "looked very uneasy"—The Duchess "puts on an Easy Appearance."



### CHAPTER III

WHEN at last it became plain to the Duchess of Marlborough that she no longer held her former place in the Sovereign's friendship, instead of attributing the cause to her own conduct, she immediately suspected that her brother-in-law, Admiral George Churchill, had influenced the Queen against her. As a Gentleman of the Bedchamber to, and prime favourite of, Prince George, whose duties as Lord High Admiral he transacted for His Highness, George Churchill—who is described as “a coarse fat man much marked with small-pox”—was supposed to have gained Her Majesty's ear ; whilst as he was on unfriendly terms with his relatives, had agreed with the Tories in condemning his brother's management of the war, and at a public dinner had joined in a sarcastic toast which reflected on the great general, the duchess had little doubt as to the use he would make of his influence with the Queen.

As usual, she hurried to communicate her grievances to her lord, on which he wrote back : “I cannot believe but that you lay a great deal more to George

Churchill's charge than he deserves ; for the Queen has no great opinion of him, and never speaks to him." Soon after the receipt of this letter her suspicions fell on another relative, one Abigail Hill, who had been appointed as an attendant on Her Majesty by the duchess, in order to lighten the duties which became irksome to herself as she advanced in position. Believing that gratitude and affinity would bind this bedchamber woman to her own cause, she had placed her in a position where she could observe and report on the tactics of the Court and the feelings of the Sovereign ; when satisfied with Abigail's conduct and discretion, the duchess more and more frequently absented herself from attendance on the Queen, of which she was growing tired, it was only to discover with inexpressible scorn that this bedchamber woman was now honoured by Her Majesty's confidence and affection.

As already stated, the duchess's grandfather, Sir John Jennings, was the father of two-and-twenty children. One of these married a merchant named Hill, who was a cousin of Robert Harley. The merchant had an unprosperous career, which led to bankruptcy, and having brought four children into the world, he himself quitted it. The duchess loftily states she "never knew there were such people in the world" until an acquaintance brought her word of their existence and declared they were in want, on which she immediately sent ten guineas to the aunt she had never seen, with an assurance that she would



do what she could for her and her children. After this Mrs. Hill waited on her, and measures were taken to provide for them. The eldest daughter Abigail, already in service as a nurserymaid, was sent to Holywell House, St. Albans, where, says the duchess, "she lived with me and my children, and I treated her with as great kindness as if she had been my sister." Some time after, when a vacancy occurred, she was made a Woman of the Bedchamber to the Princess Anne, through the influence of her cousin; whilst the second daughter was appointed laundress to the Duke of Gloucester, and on his death she received a pension of two hundred a year. As for the boys, the eldest was given a place in the Custom House, and eventually rose to hold a good position.

"His brother, Jack Hill," writes the duchess, "was a tall boy, whom I clothed (for he was all in rags) and put to school at St. Albans to one Mr. James; and whenever I went there I sent for him, and was as kind to him as if he had been my own child. After he had learned what he could there, a vacancy happening of Page of Honour to the Prince of Denmark, his Highness was pleased at my request to take him. I afterwards got my Lord Marlborough to make him Groom of the Bedchamber to the Duke of Gloucester; and though my lord always said that Jack Hill was good for nothing, yet to oblige me he made him his aide-de-camp, and afterwards gave him a regiment."

Abigail Hill was an unattractive woman, with a

pallid face, a large red nose, and downcast eyes ; whilst her movements were slow and silent, and her manners unobtrusive. She was also observant, and the Queen found her sympathetic ; for she was an ardent adherent of the Stuart dynasty and a staunch Tory ; and when bitter contentions between Her Majesty and the domineering duchess had often reduced the Sovereign to depression or tears, Abigail by a soothing word showed her feelings for her mistress—a comfort which was not lost on Anne, whose clinging nature demanded kindness and affection from those around her.

As the coolness increased between Her Majesty and her grace, the former extended her friendship to Abigail, whom she gradually came to regard as her comforter and confidant, in whom experience taught her she might trust ; until in the afternoon hours, when Prince George, now a chronic invalid, took his customary nap, Abigail was summoned to narrate the news of the town and the doings of Whig and Tory partisans, which both agreed to praise or condemn.

On another point they had also arrived at a common agreement : that Her Majesty's favour of her servant should be kept secret from the duchess, whose imperious temper both feared. When the latter waited on the Queen, Abigail absented herself from the royal presence, and when with her imperious kinswoman was shy and reserved, and, as the latter wrote, “avoided entering into free conversation with me, and made excuses when I wanted her to go abroad with me ;

and what I thought ill-breeding or surly honesty has since proved to be a design deeply laid, as she had always the artifice to hide very carefully the power which she had over the Queen."

But this "design deeply laid" had not yet been discovered; and Abigail's possession of the royal favour might have remained unsuspected, if circumstances regarding her marriage had not brought it to light. As she was a grown woman when first she became known to the duchess, she must now have been middle-aged. Her mature choice of a husband fell on Samuel Masham, who by the favour of her grace had been made page, equerry, and groom of the bedchamber to Prince George.

The son of a baronet who had lost his property because of his loyalty to Charles I., and who could boast of a descent from George Plantagenet Duke of Clarence, Samuel had by this time obtained a commission in the Army in which he rose to the rank of colonel, and is described by the duchess as "a soft good-natured insignificant man, always making low bows to everybody and ready to skip to open a door."

The marriage, which in every way was suitable, took place privately in the apartments of Her Majesty's favourite physician Dr. Arbuthnot, in St. James's Palace, in the spring of 1707, the Queen, whose gout caused her to move slowly, taking her furtive way by night through the long passages and corridors that divided her apartments from the doctor's, that

she might attend the ceremony ; and being accidentally seen by the small son of one of her underservants, through whom news of Her Majesty's condescension eventually reached the duchess. No reason for keeping the marriage a secret is apparent, save that perhaps all concerned feared the interference of her grace, whose imperious will and pleasure it was to regulate all things within the palace walls.

On hearing the news she immediately hurried to Abigail and asked if it were true that she was married, when the latter acknowledged it was, and asked pardon for having concealed it. "As much reason as I had to take ill this reserve in her behaviour," writes the duchess, "I was willing to impute it to her bashfulness and want of breeding, rather than to anything worse. I embraced her with my usual tenderness and very heartily wished her joy ; and then turning the discourse, entered into her concerns in as friendly a manner as possible, contriving how to accommodate her with lodgings by removing her sister into some of my own."

She then enquired if the Queen knew of the marriage and innocently offered her services if necessary to break the news ; but Abigail, who "had by this time learnt the art of dissimulation pretty well, replied that Her Majesty had already been acquainted with it by the bedchamber woman, "hoping," as the duchess explains, "by this answer to divert any further examination into the matter."

On hearing this the duchess's temper rose and "bursting into the royal presence" she demanded of

the Queen why she had not told her of Abigail's marriage, "expostulating with her," to use her own phrase, "and reminding her that she used to say when she was desired to keep anything a secret, she would however tell it to me, because according to Montaigne's observation, telling a thing to a friend, is only telling it to oneself; but yet she had kept the secret of my cousin Hill marrying Mr. Masham, a long time from me. But the only thing I was concerned at, that it plainly showed a change in Her Majesty towards me, as I had once before observed to her: when the Queen was pleased to say 'that it was not she that was changed but me, and that if I was the same to her, she was sure she was to me'; the Queen added with a good deal of earnestness, 'I believe I have spoken to Masham a hundred times to tell you of her marriage, but she would not.' This startled me and blind as I had been before, I began to open my eyes when I came to reflect upon these words which plainly implied that Mrs. Masham had often had consultations with the Queen, though she would not have been thought to presume to speak to Her Majesty about this or anything else."

"The conduct both of the Queen and Mrs. Masham," continues the duchess, "convinced me that there was some mystery in the affair, and thereupon I set myself to enquire as particularly as I could into it; and in less than a week's time I discovered that my cousin was become an absolute favourite,—that the Queen herself was present at her marriage in Dr. Arbuthnot's

lodgings, at which time Her Majesty had called for a round sum out of the privy purse ; that Mrs. Masham came often to the Queen when the Prince was asleep, and was generally two hours every day in private with her ; and I likewise then discovered beyond all dispute Mr. Harley's correspondence and interest at Court by means of this woman. I was struck with astonishment at such an instance of ingratitude, and should not have believed, had there been any room left for doubting."

The impetuous duchess immediately wrote to her husband complaining of the abominable plot which had undermined her, and of Abigail's treachery ; when he, who was at this time in Lower Germany with his army, replied briefly and with his usual temperate judgment and good sense, that "The wisest thing is to have to do with as few people as possible. If you are sure that Mrs. Masham speaks of business to the Queen, I should think you might with some caution tell her of it, which would do good. For she certainly must be grateful and will mind what you say."

The Duchess who indulged in the habit of letter writing, so dangerous to impulsive people, then addressed a note to the Queen concerning Abigail, to which she received the following reply from Her Majesty: "I beg you would not mention that person any more who you are pleased to call the object of my favour, for whatever character the malicious world may give her, I do assure you it will never have any weight with me, knowing she does not deserve it ; nor can

I ever change the good impression you once gave me of her, unless she should give me a cause, which I am very sure she never will."

Abigail's possession of the royal favour seemed to throw light on many small matters which previously had not been thought worthy of notice. "It became easy now to decypher many particulars," writes the duchess, "which had hitherto remained mysterious, and my reflection quickly brought to my mind many passages which had seemed odd and unaccountable, but had left no impressions of suspicion or jealousy. Particularly I remembered that a long while before this, being with the Queen (to whom I had gone very privately by a secret passage from my lodgings to the bedchamber) on a sudden this woman, not knowing I was there, came in with the boldest and gaiest air possible, but upon sight of me, stopped; and immediately changing her manner and making a most solemn courtesy said, 'Did your Majesty ring?' and then went out again. This singular behaviour needed no interpreter now to make it understood."

It was, however, sufficient to kindle the duchess's rage, and to form the subject of a correspondence between herself and royalty, as will be seen from the following submissive letter written by the sorely tried peace-loving Sovereign. "You are pleased to accuse me," says Her Majesty, "of several things in your last letter very unjustly, especially concerning Masham. You say I avoided giving you a direct answer to what I must know is your greatest uneasyness, giving it a turn

as if it were only the business of the day that had occasioned your suspicion. What I told you in my letter is very true, and no turn as you are pleased to call it. It is very true I had the minute before you came into the door, sent for Masham to come to prayers she being in waiting ; and as soon as you were gone I went to publick prayers and the minute they were over went into my clossett to make an end of my private ones, and I did not see Masham again until I went to supper ; and I did not think it necessary when I writt last to trouble you soe much on this subject, hoping you would have believed the short answer I then gave you."

This letter which is preserved in the Blenheim library, was not given by the duchess in the Account of her Conduct, where mention is made of Abigail's " singular behaviour " and complaints of the Queen's duplicity.

A greater grievance lay in store for her grace when, from enquiries and watchfulness, she learned that the detested Robert Harley, who was Abigail's kinsman and friend, on pretence of transacting state business with the Queen, had been frequently admitted to the royal presence by the bedchamber woman, where he endeavoured to strengthen Her Majesty's predilection for the Tories, and ripen her prejudice against the Whigs of whom her Ministry was largely composed ; for with consummate skill he touched on the point to which she was most sensitive—her royal prerogative—and represented that as the Whigs engrossed all offices of the State, they had reduced her to a degree of



dependence unworthy of a Sovereign. Nor did he fail, with that tact which was his great talent, to point out how wholly she was dominated by the duchess, and endeavour to persuade her to independence; words which were not lost on her pliant mind, sorely humiliated by the haughty treatment she now received from her former favourite.

As Harley was a Jacobite as well as a Tory, her grace detested him, and in public "despised his civilities with a haughty scorn," whilst in writing of him she could not find words to describe him, had not an anonymous friend been kind enough to supply them, as she states. "He was," says this unnamed individual whose force so strongly resembles that of her grace, "a cunning and a dark man, of too small abilities to do much good, but of all the qualities requisite to do mischief and to bring on the ruin and destruction of a nation. This mischievous darkness of his soul was written in his countenance, and plainly legible in a very odd look, disagreeable to everybody at first sight, which being joined with a constant awkward motion or rather agitation of his head and body, betrayed a turbulent dishonesty within, even in the midst of those familiar airs, jocular bowing and smiling, which he always affected to cover what could not be covered."

Fortunately for him the world was not so discerning as the duchess or her descriptive friend, so that he continued to enjoy Her Majesty's favour, though it is evident the latter is warned against him in the letter written to the Queen by the duchess in the August of

1707. This patronising epistle begins by requesting Mrs. Morley to return a picture "which I know you would not have me trouble you with," says her grace ; " and I have been so often discouraged in things of this nature, that I believe nobody in the world but myself would attempt it ; but I know Mrs. Morley's intentions are good, and to let her run on in so many mistakes that must of necessity draw her into great misfortunes at last, is just as if one should see a friend's house on fire and let them be burnt in their beds without endeavouring to wake them, only because they had taken laudanum, and did not desire to be disturbed.

" This is the very case of poor dear Mrs. Morley ; nothing seems agreeable to her but what comes from the artifices of one that has been always reported to have a great talent that way. I heartily wish she may discover her true friends before she suffers for want of that knowledge."

The concluding paragraph betrays the jealousy the once great favourite could not help feeling. " Finding Mrs. Morley has so little time to spare, unless it be to speak to those who are more agreeable, or that say what she likes on these subjects, I have taken the liberty to write an answer to this—which you will say is sincere and can be no great trouble to sign it with Morley."

The Queen who was spending the summer at Windsor, where she delighted to hunt the stag in her chaise, was now in better spirits than she had been since the death of the little Duke, her son ; one cause for

which was that in the previous spring, April 24th, 1707, the union of Scotland with England had taken place, a fact she described as "the happiness of her reign." It must also have been a satisfaction to her kindly nature that at the same time a barbarous law was repealed in Scotland, which had allowed the torture of criminals as a means of eliciting evidence; a law which had been set in force under Queen Mary, when a follower of her father's, Nevill Payne, had been tortured to death.

Her Majesty would have been much happier still but for her domestic troubles, chief of which was the health of her Consort, who through self-indulgence had grown enormously stout, and who suffered severely from asthma. Always devoted to him, her nights were frequently disturbed by his fits of coughing and painful efforts to catch breath, when assisted by Abigail, who slept in an ante-room, she supported him in a sitting position and did all she could to lessen his distress.

The strained situation regarding Her Majesty, the duchess, and Abigail, remained the same throughout the summer. When in attendance on the Queen at Windsor, her grace generally found Mrs. Masham in the waiting-room, ready to go into the royal presence as she the duchess came out. On one of these occasions as she passed, she told Abigail she desired to have some talk with her, when the bedchamber woman answered with a low courtesy and a great deal of humility that she would wait upon her. But days came and went until her grace was about to leave

Windsor for Woodstock, and Abigail did not keep her promise ; whereon her kinswoman wrote to her on September 23rd, 1707.

“Since the conversation I had with you at your lodgings, several things have happened to confirm me in what I was hard to believe, that you have made me returns very unsuitable to what I might have expected. I always speak my mind so plainly, that I should have told you so myself, if I had had the opportunity which I hoped for. But being now so near parting, think this way of letting you know it, is like to be the least uneasy to you, as well as to your humble servant.” Having despatched this to Abigail's apartments, the duchess waited all the morning for a reply ; but as this was not forthcoming she set out for Woodstock where an answer was sent her, “the whole frame and style of which shewed it to be the genuine product of an artful man who knew perfectly well the management of such an affair.”

This reply, which the duchess believed to have been dictated by Harley, was written with a simplicity and diplomacy that must have surprised and irritated its receiver. “Whilst I was expecting a message from your grace,” it began, “to wait upon you according to your commands, last night I received a letter which surprises me no less than it afflicts me, because it lays a most heavy charge upon me of an ungrateful behaviour to your grace. Her Majesty was pleased to tell me that you was angry with me for not acquainting you with my marriage. I did believe

after so generous a pardon your Grace would think no more of that.

"I am confident by the expression of your letter, that somebody has told some malicious lie of me to your grace, from which it is impossible for me to vindicate myself till I know the crime I am accused of. I am sure, madam, your goodness cannot deny me what the meanest may ask the greatest ; I mean justice to know my accuser. Without that all friendship must be at the mercy of every malicious liar, as they are who have so barbarously and unjustly brought me under your displeasure, the greatest unhappiness that could befall me. I therefore make it my most humble request to your grace, that if ever I had the least share of your friendship, you would be pleased to give me that parting token to let me know who this wicked person is, and then I do not doubt but I shall make it plain how much they have wronged me, as well as imposed upon your grace. As my affliction is very great, you will I hope in compassion let me hear from you, and believe me what I really am, madam, your grace's most humble and faithful servant."

The answer made by the duchess to this letter was brief and candid. "Her complaints," she said, were not caused by any ill offices done her, but resulted from her own observations. But as she did not think the subject could be discussed in a letter, she would wait until they met to talk it over, and meanwhile give her no further trouble.

The duchess was now persuaded, not only that she was being undermined in Her Majesty's favour by Abigail, but that the latter was being used by Robert Harley to strengthen the Queen's prejudices against her Whig ministers, and in this way to hamper their endeavours. Lord Godolphin, always timid and vacillating, had by this time become a Whig ; having been frightened into joining the ranks of those who were once his opponents, by their general threats to reveal his dealings with the King over the water, and by the particular intimidation of Lord Wharton, who declared he had "the lord treasurer's head in a bag." Probably instructed by the duchess, Lord Godolphin assured Her Majesty that Harley's interference with the Government was of the utmost prejudice to her affairs ; but the Queen placed little faith in what he said of one whom she secretly favoured, on which the Lord Treasurer, acting no doubt in obedience to a stronger will than his own, said that if Harley continued to act as he did, and have so much credit with her as he had, both the Duke of Marlborough and himself must quit her service. At this the poor Queen was greatly troubled ; and, as had always been the case when such threats had been made, she at once wrote to her dear Mrs. Freeman. In a letter penned at Kensington Palace on October 30th, 1707, she says that if she had not answered all her friend's letters, she hoped it would not be imputed to anything but the fear she had of adding to the ill impressions Mrs. Freeman entertained of her. For though both

were of the same opinion in the main, they could not exactly agree in everything, and what she said was not considered to have any reason in it, which made her unwilling to enter into particulars.

“But though I am unwilling to do it,” continues the Queen, “it is impossible for me to help giving you some answer to your last letter, in which I find you think me insensible of everything. I am very sorry you, who have known me so long, can give way to such a thought as that I do not think the parting with my Lord Marlborough and my lord treasurer of much consequence, because I did not mention anything of my Lord Marlborough’s kind letter concerning me. The reason of that was, I really was in a great hurry when I writ to you, and not having time to write on that subject to both, I thought it was the most necessary to endeavour to let him see he had no reason to have suspicions of any one’s having power with me besides himself and my lord treasurer, and I hope they will believe me.”

She trusts that dear Mrs. Freeman will not think her so insensible of the great services rendered her by the duke and Lord Godolphin, nor of the misfortune it would be if they should quit her service. She was however certain their love of honour and their patriotism was too great to make them resign without a cause; “And I beg,” she concludes, “you would not add that to my other misfortunes, of pushing them on to such an unjust and unjustifiable action. I think I had best say no more for fear of being too

troublesome. But whatever becomes of me, I shall always preserve a most sincere and tender passion for my dear Mrs. Freeman to my last moment."

Not satisfied with these expressions of humility and affection, and probably in the hope of softening the Duchess's mind, the Queen wrote her another letter a few days later, so generous and appealing that it must be given in full.

"My dear Mrs. Freeman," it ran ; "I cannot go to bed without renewing a request that I have often made, that you would banish all unkind and unjust thoughts of your poor unfortunate faithful Morley, which I saw by the glimpse I had of you yesterday you were full of. Indeed I do not deserve them, and if you could see my heart, you would find it as sincere, as tender, and passionately fond of you as ever, and as truly sensible of your kindness in telling me your mind freely upon all occasions. Nothing shall ever alter me. Though we have the misfortune to differ in some things, I will ever be the same to my dear, dear Mrs. Freeman, who I do assure once more, I am more tenderly and sincerely hers than it is possible ever to express."

When the Court came to town, Abigail acknowledged her marriage, which there had never been any reason to conceal, and was congratulated by her friends. Any notice it caused was completely eclipsed by two other unions which were celebrated at this time. The first was that of the eccentric Lady Derwentwater, daughter of Charles II. and Moll Davis. She had



first been united to a certain Mr. Grims, but he, departing from this weary world and his flighty wife, she gave herself to James Roock. Writing of the event Lady Wentworth says: "Grims has been dead not three-qrs of a year yet; she turned Lady Tuften's children out of the church and said she would not be married tel they went out. She was married in whit sattin and she came and went in her moarning coach. She has setled fower hundred a year upon him for her life, and the rest she keeps for herself and hous."

The second marriage, which caused much amusement, is gossiped about by another member of the Wentworth family, and is contained in the Wentworth papers. "Mrs. Harriett Cavendish that used to kiss Grigson the gardener is married to Lord Huntingtower; and Lord Dissert his father says he suspected it, and could have hindered itt if he had pleased, but if he had known his son would have hang'd himself or cut his throat he should not have hindered him."

But such gossip did not divert the duchess from thinking of her grievances regarding Abigail, who was expected to wait on her grace when the latter returned from Woodstock. "But to my great surprize," says the Duchess, "I was twelve days at St. James's under the same roof with her, before I had so much as any message from her. At length, having one night past by her window in my return home, she sent one of her maids to my woman to ask her how I did, and to let me know that she was gone to Kensington."

This behaviour seemed so ridiculous to the duchess, that when next she saw the Queen she could not help speaking of it, and at the same time telling her of what had passed between them. "The Queen looked grave," to quote the duchess's words, "and said she (Abigail) was mightily in the right not to come near me. I answered that I did not understand that, since she had expressed such a concern at my displeasure, and since the clearing up of matters had been reserved to our meeting. The Queen replied that it was very natural for her to be afraid to come to me, when she saw I was angry with her. To this I answered that she could have no reason to be afraid, unless she knew herself guilty of some crime. It was the Queen's usual way on any occasion where she was predetermined, (and my Lord Marlborough has told me that it was her father's,) to repeat over and over some principal words she had resolved to use, and to stick firmly to them. She continued therefore to say it was very natural, and she (Abigail) was very much in the right. So that this conversation with Her Majesty produced nothing but an undeniable proof that the new favourite was deeply rooted in her heart and affections; and that it was thought more advisable to let the breach between me and Mrs. Masham grow wider and wider, than to see any method to make it up."

The suave and compliant Godolphin was asked to remonstrate with the Queen, when he, thinking it not beneath him to interfere in this petty quarrel about a

bedchamber woman, did as he was bidden, and reported that "he had indeed convinced the Queen that Mrs. Masham was in the wrong ; but that it was evident that Her Majesty would have preferred considering her to be in the right."

It was possibly as a result of his representations that a day or two later Abigail wrote to the duchess asking her "to appoint a time to be waited on, that she might learn from her wherein she had offended." A time and place were named, and Abigail appeared before the irate duchess, as might a prisoner before his judge. With her customary straightforwardness her grace began by plunging into the subject of their dispute. It was plain, she said, that the Queen was much changed towards her, and that such change could only be attributed to Abigail's secret management ; that the latter had been frequently with Her Majesty in private, and that the very fact of her attempting to conceal this by artifice from such a friend, was in itself a very ill sign and enough to prove a bad purpose at bottom."

At this and whatever else the duchess may have said and left unwritten, Abigail burst into tears, and in her nervousness made a tactless remark, that she was sure the Queen who had loved the duchess extremely, would always be very kind to her. The effect of these words may be imagined.

"It was some minutes," wrote her grace, "before I could recover from the surprize with which so extraordinary an answer struck me. To see a woman

whom I had raised out of the dust, put on such a superior air, and to hear her assure me by way of consolation, that the Queen would be always kind to me. At length I went on to reproach her with her ingratitude and her secret management with the Queen to undermine those who had so long and with so much honour served Her Majesty. To this she answered that she never spoke to the Queen about business, but that she sometimes gave her petitions which came to the back stairs, and with which she knew I did not care to be troubled. And with such insincere answers she thought to colour over the matter, while I knew for certain she had before this, obtained pensions for several of her friends, and had frequently paid to others out of the privy purse, sums of money which the Queen had ordered me to bring her ; and that she was every day, long with Her Majesty in private."

Abigail heard these reproaches in silence and then rising suddenly hoped the duchess would give her leave to call occasionally and enquire for her health, "which however," adds her kinswoman, "it is plain she did not design to do, for she never once came near me after this." For all that, when Abigail's marriage was made public, the duchess and her daughter, Lady Sunderland, called on her : "not," says the former, "that I intended to have any further intercourse with her, or to dissemble the ill opinion I had of her (as I had fully resolved to let her then know, in case I found an opportunity of speaking to her privately) but purely out of respect to the Queen,



**SARAH, DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH.**



and to avoid any noise or disagreeable discourse which my refusing that ordinary part of civility might occasion."

The duchess continued in a state of anger with Abigail, and of indignation with the Queen: for like many another well-meaning, tactless, and self-righteous person, she was blind to her own shortcomings, and could not see that her own acts and words had caused this alienation between herself and her sovereign. When the Christmas holidays came, she went to pay her respects to the Queen, but before entering the royal presence, found time to learn from a page that Mrs. Masham had just been sent for by Her Majesty. When the duchess went to the Queen she saw that her Sovereign looked very uneasy. "She stood all the while I was with her," writes her grace, "and looked as coldly upon me as if her intention was that I should no longer doubt of my loss of her affections. Upon observing what reception I had, I said I was very sorry I had happened to come so unseasonably. I was making my courtesy to go away, when the Queen with a great deal of disorder in her face and without speaking one word, took me by the hand; and when thereupon I stooped to kiss hers, she took me up with a very cold embrace and then without one kind word, let me go."

As may be imagined the duchess on returning home treated Her Majesty to one of those expostulations framed "in the plainest and sincerest manner possible." Amongst other things she pointed out the difference

between her last reception and those she had formerly met with when Mrs. Morley was so glad to welcome, so sorry to part from her ; and declared her reproaches were not to be wondered at on receiving an embrace "that seemed to have no satisfaction in it, but that of getting rid of her, in order to enjoy the conversation of one that has the good fortune to please you much better, though I am sure nobody did ever endeavour it with more sincerity than Mrs. Freeman has done."

It was some days before an answer was made to this lengthy epistle, when the Queen, always anxious for peace, "softened what had past." On that the duchess was so much pleased that she "once more put on as easy an appearance as she could" ; and the year ended without further outbreaks of hostility between them.



## CHAPTER IV

A Troublesome Year for the Queen—Her Unwillingness to part with Robert Harley—Difficulties with Her Council—The Duchess of Marlborough's Request—Her Letter to the Queen—News of an Invasion—Anne's Regard for Her Brother—Who for the First Time is spoken of as The Pretender—Her Majesty's Dread of the House of Hanover—The Queen is lectured by the Duke of Marlborough—Her Meek Reply—The Duchess is once more wrathful—Commands Her Sovereign to be silent—Letters from Her Grace—Replies from the Queen—Her Majesty goes to Bath—Illness of Prince George—An Italian Magician offers to heal Him—Prevalent Belief in Occult Power—Fortune-tellers and Astrologers—John Partridge, Student in Physick and Astrology—Dean Swift's Joke and Its Consequences—Prince George dies—The Duchess and the Queen—Jealousy of Abigail—Parliament wishes Her Majesty to marry again—Her Judicious Reply—Court Mourning—The Duchess writes to the Queen—Her Majesty complains to the Duke of His Wife—The Latter has a Violent Interview with Her Sovereign—The Duke again speaks of retiring.



## CHAPTER IV

THE following year 1708, was destined to produce many events which sorely tried the Queen. The first of these happened in February when she was forced to part with Robert Harley, a Tory minister whom she had come to regard as her friend and adviser, but whose influence and intentions were dreaded by the Whig ministers in general, and Lord Godolphin and the Duke of Marlborough in particular. The former had frequently threatened to resign his post as Treasurer should Harley be retained in office; whilst the latter wrote to the Queen that out of regard to his honour and reputation "no consideration could make him serve any longer with that man." He furthermore requested Her Majesty to regard him as forced out of her service so long as Harley continued in it.

These threats had little effect on the Queen who was unwilling to dismiss Harley, and a Cabinet Council was summoned as usual for Sunday, February 9th; Sundays being generally the days selected by Her Majesty for holding council with her ministers. Before

the Cabinet assembled the duke waited on his Sovereign and repeated his determination not to sit at the same board with Harley, on which she earnestly strove to alter his decision; and would not promise to part with Harley. At the appointed hour the Cabinet Council assembled but neither Godolphin nor Marlborough were present. Her Majesty having taken her seat, Harley as usual began with the business of the day, when half-smothered murmurs were heard, on which he paused; when the Duke of Somerset rose and addressing the Queen said "that if she suffered that fellow to treat of affairs of the war without the advice of the general, he could not serve her."

At this the Queen broke up the meeting and retired in anger and alarm. News of what had happened spread rapidly through the town causing the greatest concern, the Whigs expressing bitter dissatisfaction. But for all that Her Majesty refused to dismiss Harley until he came and begged her to accept his resignation. This request was backed by Prince George who was alarmed by the feeling roused against the Secretary, and Harley went out of office.

Speaking of the disturbed Cabinet meeting, Lord Dartmouth says "Next morning the Duke of Roxborough came to my house and told me the Duke of Marlborough was gone in a great pet to the Lodge at Windsor, and left the Queen incensed beyond measure. I asked him if he had seen her. He said there were particular reasons which made it improper

for him, but advised me to go immediately and make my compliments, which he could assure me would be very well taken. Accordingly I went; the Queen received me most graciously, and it was plain I had not been sent thither by chance. After I had made some professions of duty and zeal for her service, and resentment for the insolent treatment I understood she had received from some of her servants . . . I asked her if it would be agreeable that other people should express their duty upon that occasion. She said it would; upon which the back stairs were very much crowded for two or three days till the Duke of Marlborough was advised to return and make his submissions; which in appearance were accepted by the Queen."

Robert Harley's resignation was followed by others, and satisfied with the fresh appointments made, the Duke of Marlborough went abroad to continue the war.

A day or two before his departure, the duchess waited upon Her Majesty to give her a piece of her mind. She began by saying that although the Queen did not speak of her affairs as formerly to her friend, yet everything that passed was told her by the duke and Lord Godolphin, who she foresaw would be forced to leave Her Majesty's service very soon. When this happened, the duchess continued, she could no longer remain at Court. She had therefore a favour to ask Her Majesty, that she would give her leave to resign her appointments to

her children, so that she might have the satisfaction of seeing them enjoy these places as legacies from herself.

The Queen remained silent and embarrassed at this unexpected request to continue in the same family, posts which were valued at between six and nine thousand a year; but the duchess continued her importunities by saying that her daughter's appointments could not injure any one, and nobody could wonder that Her Majesty would wish to bestow this mark of favour and friendship on one who had served her so long: all of which, as she admits, the Queen heard "very patiently," and at length, possibly by way of avoiding a promise, said she could not grant this request because she would not part with the duchess as long as she lived.

"But I still continued to press the Queen to grant me the favour I desired of her and the Queen denied it in the same kind way," writes her grace. "At last the whole ended with this, that if the duke could continue in her service, I should not desire to leave her; but if that proved to be impossible, I hoped she would be pleased to grant my request of resigning my places to my children. The Queen promised me she would do it, and I kissed her hand on that account." Not satisfied with this verbal promise, the duchess did not rest until Her Majesty had also given it to her in writing. And scarcely was this done when, on March 31st, she wrote the following letter.

"MADAM. Upon Lord Marlborough's going into Holland, I believe your Majesty will neither be surprised nor displeased to hear I am gone into the country, since by your very hard and uncommon usage of me, you have convinced all sorts of people as well as myself, that nothing would be so uneasy to you as my near attendance. Upon this account I thought it might not be improper at my going into the country, to acquaint your Majesty that even while Lord Marlborough continues in your service, as well as when he finds himself obliged to leave it, if your Majesty thinks fit to dispose of my employments according to the solemn assurances you have been pleased to give me, you shall meet with all the submission and acknowledgments imaginable."

Her resignation was not accepted and her quarrels with royalty were continued for some short time longer.

It was at this period that an alarm spread through the kingdom that King James's son was about to invade Scotland. To this purpose he was brought by the disaffection to Anne and the loyalty to himself existing in that country, especially amongst the Highland clans; by the Queen's known timidity, and her aversion to the Hanoverian line; by the correspondence that had passed between himself and Marlborough and Godolphin; by the favour in which he was held by many Tories; and by the support of the Jacobites. Whether he intended to claim the crown or merely to secure his succession is unknown,

Preparations were immediately made to meet the attack, and a Cabinet Council was held presided over by the Queen, who was deeply distressed by fears for the safety of her country and the fate of her brother. At this council Admiral Sir George Byng was commanded to sail for Dunkirk with twenty-three ships of war. On asking for instructions as to how the Prince should be treated in case he fell into his hands, it was suggested by some present that "measures of despatch" or death, should be dealt him, on which the Queen burst into tears and the council broke up in confusion.

The invasion was mere child's play, though entered into very seriously by the Prince, then in his twentieth year, who under the name of the Chevalier de St. George, joined the expedition. His ship carried services of gold plate, liveries, uniforms, and every requisite for a splendid court; whilst his banners and colours bearing the royal motto "Dieu et mon droit," had been blessed by the pope.

No landing was gained by the invader, and the single running fight between his handful of ships and the English squadron could not be dignified by the name of an engagement. One of the enemy's ships called the *Salisbury*, once captured by France was now retaken, the others were driven out to sea and were glad enough to return to France, though with the loss of four thousand men from hardship and sickness. The Prince was not captured, though four of his English followers met that fate; they



being Lord Griffin, Lord Clermont, his brother Mr. Middleton, and Colonel Warcope. All of them were tried for high treason and Lord Griffin was condemned to death ; but the Queen was miserable that this old friend and follower of her father's, and adherent of her brother's should be executed, and she granted him a reprieve. Eventually he died in the Tower, it was supposed of old age.

Though having little belief that this invasion could succeed, both Marlborough and Godolphin were eager to hear of its results. When news was brought them of the dispersal of the French fleet, the former kept silent, but Godolphin after a pause raised his eyes and said "Well, man proposes and God disposes."

Parliament congratulated the Queen on the defeat of the invasion, and in speaking the reply framed for her, she for the first time referred to her brother as the Pretender, a term by which he was henceforth known to all supporters of the House of Hanover. At this period Her Majesty was much disturbed by an intimation given her by Lord Haversham, that Parliament intended during the next session to force her into inviting the Electoral Prince—afterwards George II. to reside in England. In her alarm she wrote to the Duke of Marlborough then in Germany, begging that he would discover whether there was a design "that the young man should make a visit in the winter, and contrive some way to put any such thought out of their head, that the difficulty may not be brought upon me of refusing him leave to come, if he should

ask it ; or forbidding him to come if he should attempt it. For one of these two things I must do, if either he or his father should have any desires to have him see this country ; it being a thing I cannot bear to have any successor here, though but for a week. And therefore I shall depend upon you, to do everything on the other side of the water to prevent this mortification from coming upon her that is and ever will be most sincerely yours."

The fact that the duchess, with her customary want of tact, had recommended this visit to the Queen, did not help to reconcile them ; the former acting in this as the mouthpiece of her party, who a little while before had opposed an invitation to the Electress Sophia, in order to gain Her Majesty's favour ; despairing of which they were now willing to show their resentment by harassing her. Amongst Her Majesty's other troubles at this time were the failing health of her husband ; an endeavour to dismiss Abigail ; and the conduct of Lord Sunderland whom she accused of employing her name and authority to secure the election of his own partisans, and who in turn rudely remonstrated with her on her partiality for the Tories. In writing of him to Lord Godolphin on June 22nd of this year she says : "I cannot forbear putting you in mind of the promise you made to me when I first took this person into my service, which was that if he did anything I did not like, or something to that purpose, you would bring him to make his leg and to take his leave. I need not mention the many

instances that are past of his behaviour ; you must remember them very well."

It was no wonder she complained that there was no end to her troubles, and that in a letter to the Duke of Marlborough—in which by the way she terms herself his sincere and humble servant—she should speak of her afflicted heart.

In July the duke at, a great loss of life, won the famous victory of Oudenard. When the news was communicated to the Queen she, according to Tindal, exclaimed, "O Lord when will all this bloodshed cease?" However, a letter of hers to the Duke remains, dated from Windsor on July 6th, 1708, in which she declares she wants words to express the joy she felt for such a glorious success, for which, next to God, her thanks are due to her great general. "And indeed," continues this epistle, "I can never say enough for all the great and faithful services you have ever done me. But be so just as to believe, I am as truly sensible of them as a grateful heart can be, and shall be ready to show it upon all occasions. I hope you cannot doubt of my esteem and friendship for you ; nor think, because I differ from you in some things, it is for want of either. No, I do assure you, if you were here, I am sure you would not think me so much in the wrong in some things as I fear you do now. . . . And be assured I shall ever be sincerely your humble servant."

To this the duke replied by returning thanks for her goodness, and saying that whilst he was ready to give his life for her service in the Army, he would

no longer hold office in her Ministry. He felt obliged he continued, to speak his mind freely, and assured her it was her duty as a good Christian to have no more resentments to any particular person or party, but to make use of such as could carry on the war with vigour, which was the only way "to preserve our religion, our liberties, and the crown on your head."

With this lecture ringing in her royal ears, the poor distracted Queen sat down to reply to the great general. In the course of her letter she says: "For tho' you say you will serve me as a general but not as a minister, I shall always look upon you as both, and never separate those two characters, but ask your advice in both capacities on all occasions. You seem to wave giving any answer to these two letters I have mentioned, and after answering my sincere congratulations on your last glorious success, you tell me you think I am obliged in conscience as a good Christian to forgive and forget all resentments I may have to any particular person or party. I thank God I do forgive all my enemies with all my heart, but it is wholly impossible in human nature, to forget people's behaviour in things so fresh in one's memory, so far as to have a good opinion of them."

However, the duke's faithful and humble servant celebrated his victory by going once more to St. Paul's Cathedral and there returning thanks for that event. The 19th of August was fixed for the occasion, and on that peerless summer day great crowds gathered in the streets, and much bustle and preparation were made

outside and inside St. James's Palace, from whence the royal procession was to start. Her Majesty's private apartments were crowded from an early hour in the morning by her dressers, her women of the bedchamber, her ladies of the bedchamber, her maids of honour and ladies-in-waiting, the Duchess of Marlborough moving supreme and commanding amongst them. As Mistress of the Robes, she laid out the jewels which she wished the Queen to wear, but Her Majesty who never cared for such adornment, absolutely refused to don them ; an act her grace set down to the influence or interference of Abigail.

Great therefore was the duchess's wrath at this disobedience of her Sovereign, and an altercation was begun in the palace and continued in the royal carriage, nor could the duchess's jealous fury be silenced in the church where she continued to complain, not only of Mrs. Masham's influence, but of the duke's loss of Her Majesty's confidence and favour ; and when the Queen would have replied, she was haughtily commanded to keep silent. Although Anne had borne with stormy interviews, taunting language, impertinent letters, and a contemptuous air to which two contemporaries bear witness, this last insult from the duchess touched her to the quick, and was never forgotten or forgiven. .

The proverbial calm failed to succeed this storm, for next day the duchess forwarded a letter of the duke's, together with a peremptory note from herself which said, "I cannot help sending Your Majesty

this letter to show how exactly Lord Marlborough agrees with me in my opinion, that he has now no interest with you ; though when I said so in the church on Thursday, you were pleased to say it was untrue. And yet I think he will be surprised to hear that when I had taken so much pains to put your jewels in a way that I thought you would like, Mrs. Masham could make you refuse to wear them, in so unkind a manner ; because that was a power she had not thought fit to exercise before.

"I will make no reflections upon it ; only that I must needs observe, that Your Majesty choose a very wrong day to mortify me, when you were just going to return thanks for a victory obtained by Lord Marlborough."

After two days' deliberation the Queen wrote the following answer which shows a marked change from her usual communications : " After the *commands* you gave me on the thanksgiving day, of not answering you, I should not have troubled you with these lines, but to return the Duke of Marlborough's letter safe into your hands, and for the same reason do not say anything to that, nor to yours which enclosed it."

The duchess declares she thought this letter extraordinary, and she hurried to write a long reply, which contained no word of apology or regret. It was intended, as she roughly stated, "to explain what you seem to mistake in what I said at church. I desired you not to answer me there, for fear of being overheard. And this you interpret as if I had desired

you not to answer me at all, which was far from my intention. For the whole end of my writing to you so often was to get your answer to several things in which we differed ; that if I was in the wrong you might convince me of it, and I should very readily have owned my mistakes. But since you have not been pleased to show them to me, I flatter myself that I have said several things to you that are unanswerable."

After this stroke her grace makes a bargain with her Sovereign ; for if the latter will listen to the duke's advice, and convince him he has not lost credit with her, the duchess will trouble her no more with disagreeable letters. She concludes by saying "The word *command* which you use at the beginning of your letter is very unjustly supposed to come from me. For though I have always writ to you as a friend, and lived with you as such for so many years with all the truth and honesty and zeal for your service that was possible, yet I shall never forget that I am your subject, nor cease to be a faithful one."

Before the month of August ended, the Queen and her Consort set out from Windsor to Bath, whose waters, it was hoped, would benefit him. The Royal pair and their suite took three days to make the journey, resting one night at Oxford, where they were loyally entertained, not only with a great dinner, but with a vocal and instrumental concert, where "several poesies were exhibited in honour of their visit." Within half a mile of Bath they were met by two

hundred maids most richly dressed, all in the costume of Amazons, and at the west gate the mayor and corporation welcomed them with many formalities, and conducted them to the Abbey House, which had been prepared for their reception. The night closed in with illuminations and other popular manifestations of joy.

A month's stay at "the Bath," as the phraseology of the day had it, was of little service to the Prince of Denmark, whose end, it was seen, could not be far distant. And news of his illness spreading through Europe, Her Majesty received a quaint and curious letter, yet preserved in the State Paper Office, from an Italian living near Asti, who was not only a nobleman, but a philosopher, a magician, and an alchemist. This individual, whose estates had been ruined by the war, offered, in consideration of ten thousand pounds sterling, to restore her high and mighty Majesty to her former youth and beauty and to heal her serene Consort. Nay, in his extreme generosity, he stated that, if Anne would give him apartments in the Tower, he would by his wonderful art of alchymy convert copper, brass, and other base metals into gold for her use.

That he did not use this remarkable power to enrich himself, instead of asking from another, must have struck the Queen as strange, and probably destroyed her faith in his ability to heal and rejuvenate. It may be mentioned here that at this time belief in an all-ruling fate, in the power to foresee and predict,



in the unknown forces surrounding and swaying humanity, in the lore generally termed occult, was as common as it is now. Charles I. had consulted William Lilly the astrologer, though he had failed to take that wise man's advice. The same seer had been summoned to appear before the House of Commons on October 25th, 1666, to account to the eager crowd that assembled to see him, for the manner by which some years previous to their occurrence, he had predicted the fire and the plague that had devastated London; to which he answered simply that he had applied the judgment God had given him to the study of his art, whereby such things were made known; satisfied with which answer, the Commons dismissed him with much civility.

As already mentioned, Queen Mary had consulted Mrs. Wise, the popular fortune-teller, and the Lord Treasurer spent much time in search of the philosopher's stone. Those in lower stations resorted to the astrologers, who in more liberal days were not liable to the law as rogues and vagabonds, and therefore advertised in boldness and with security.

Some amusing examples of their recommendations of themselves to the public, remain to us in the Harleian Manuscripts and in the newspapers of the day. One of the fraternity, who lived at "the Sign of the Parrot opposite to Ludgate church, within Black Fryars Gateway," says: "Noble or ignoble, you may be foretold anything that may happen to your Elementary Life; as at what time you may expect prosperity:

or if in Adversity the end thereof ; or when you may be so happy as to enjoy the Thing desired. Also young men may forsee their fortunes as in a Glass, and pretty Maids their Husbands in this Noble, yea Heavenly Art of Astrologie."

A quainter advertisement stated that "In Cripple-gate Parish, in Whitecross street, almost at the farther End near Old Street (turning in by the sign of the Black Croe in Goat Alley, straight forward down three steps at the sign of the Globe) liveth one of about thirty years Experience, and hath been Councillor to Counsellors of several Kingdoms." This wise man of the East boasted that he "hath attained to the Signet Star of the Philosopher. He likewise hath attained to the Green, Golden, and Black Dragon, known to none but Magicians and Hermetick Philosophers. He hath a secret in Art far beyond the reach or knowledge of common Pretenders." But he was rivalled by "A Person who by his Travels in many Remote parts of the world has obtained the Art of Presaging or Foretelling all Remarkable Things that ever shall happen to Men or Women in the whole course of their lives, and to the great admiration of all that ever came to him, and this he does by a method never yet practised in England."

One of the most popular if most pretentious of these astrologers was John Partridge, who cast the horoscope of the Duke of Marlborough, which may yet be seen in the British Museum. Partridge, who lived "at the 'Blue Ball,' in Salisbury Street, in the

Strand," and who styled himself "student in physick and astrology," began life as a shoemaker's apprentice. His thirst for knowledge led him to study Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, which, having mastered, he was enabled to read works on astrology and medicine in these languages. Eventually he abandoned the making of shoes for the study of the stars, in which science he was instructed by an eminent astrologer, John Gadbury; and in 1678 issued a Hebrew calendar. Two years later he began the regular publications of his almanack called *Merlinus Liberatus*. The fulfilment of many of his predictions brought him much renown, and he was at the head of his profession when it occurred to Dean Swift to raise a joke at his expense and by means of his own calling.

Accordingly, towards the end of 1707, when Partridge published his annual almanack, another appeared called "Predictions for 1708, written to prevent the people of England from being further imposed upon by vulgar almanack makers, by Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq." The most important statement this contained was that John Partridge would infallibly die on the 29th of the following March of a raging fever. The astrologer's ire may well be imagined, not only by this impudent publication, but by another which appeared on the 30th of March entitled, "The accomplishment of the first of Mr. Bickerstaff's Predictions, being an account of the death of Mr. Partridge, the almanack maker, on the 29th inst." A detailed account was then given of the astrologer's death, with a report of

a full and true account of his confession of imposture. This publication was eagerly bought, and its statements were so implicitly believed in that the Company of Stationers struck Partridge's name from the rolls, and demanded an injunction against the continued publication of his almanacks.

In vain the astrologer protested that he was the victim of a pack of rogues, and advertised that he was "not only now alive, but was alive upon the 29th of March in question," for the public persisted in believing that Bickerstaff's prediction was true, and that some impostor, for his own ends, was striving to represent the late John Partridge. For some years he was unable to issue his almanack, but resumed its publication in 1714, and continued to predict by the science of astrology until the following year, when he died at Mortlake, leaving behind him a sum of two thousand pounds.

In those days might also be met witches who cast spells and worked charms, and who were believed to give life or death to those they favoured or hated; one of them being burned at the stake for this unholy craft in the beginning of Queen Anne's reign. But no recourse to occult lore was had to heal Prince George, who in the month of October 1708, lay seriously ill at Kensington, the air of which suburb was considered better for his asthma than that of London. With an unswerving devotion, the Queen attended and waited on her dying Consort, who, though he possessed little individuality, capacity, or ambition, had for five and

twenty years been a faithful and placid husband. That their companionship was now drawing to a close became plain to all. "Nature was quite worn out in him, and no art could support him long," wrote Godolphin to the Duke of Marlborough.

No doubt the same correspondent wrote similar news to the duchess, then living at St. Albans. Though her last interview with the Queen had ended in bitterness and she had absented herself from Court for several weeks, tidings of the Prince's danger stirred her better nature, and she immediately wrote to the Queen expressing concern for Her Majesty's impending misfortune, and offering her services if they would be acceptable. But these expressions of loyalty and tenderness were counterbalanced by censure and complaint, for the opening sentence of her letter began "Though the last time I had the honour to wait upon Your Majesty your usage of me was such as was scarce possible for me to imagine, or for any one to believe." This note had hardly been finished when news reached the duchess that the Prince's death was momentarily expected, when ordering her coach she at once drove to Kensington Palace, and with characteristic want of tact, sent her letter to the Queen with a message to say she awaited Her Majesty's commands.

A moment later she hurriedly swept through the hushed and serious groups waiting the final moment in the ante-rooms, and found herself in the death chamber and in the presence of Her Majesty, who received her coldly. In an agony of grief Anne was

bending above her husband, whose pitiful gasping for breath made his ending more painful. The duchess had been in the room but a few minutes when death brought him relief. What follows is related by her in her private correspondence.

When the Queen realised that her Consort was no more, she wept aloud and wrung her hands in an outburst of misery which none could see unmoved ; on which the duchess asked all present to leave the room. When they who had once been dear friends were alone, the duchess knelt down beside Her Majesty and strove to console her, but the Queen without answering continued to cry and wring her hands, for, sore stricken by her loss, no words had power to comfort her. When later the violence of her grief became subdued, the duchess asked Her Majesty if she would not go to St. James's Palace, but the Queen replied she would stay where she was.

"That is impossible," said her grace dictatorially, "what can you do in such a dismal place?"

Although the Queen persisted in staying, the duchess continued to persuade her to leave ; for even at this melancholy moment the dread of a rival and the pangs of jealousy were not absent from the consoler's mind.

"I fancied," she wrote, "that her chief difficulty in removing was for fear she would not have so much of Mrs. Masham's company as she desired, if she removed from thence ; and without seeming to think so, I said, 'Nobody in the world ever continued in a place where

a dead husband lay,' and where could she be but within a room or two of that dismal body ; but if she were at St. James's, she need not see anybody that was uneasy to her, and she might see anybody that was a comfort to her, as well there as anywhere else." As the Queen's face seemed to express some satisfaction at this permission, the duchess added that Her Majesty could leave privately in her grace's coach, and that she would send away all the company in the ante-chambers so that they might not see her as she passed. To this the new-made widow consented, and taking off her watch said : " Don't come to me before the hand of my watch comes to this place ; and send to Masham to come to me before I go."

"This," continues the duchess, "I thought very shocking, but at the time I was resolved not to say the least wry word to displease her, and therefore answered that I would, and went out of the room with the watch in my hand."

The Queen was then left alone to take a final farewell of her dead husband, whilst the duchess went to give the necessary orders. But she did not send for her rival, as Her Majesty had requested and she had promised ; for "I thought it so disagreeable for me to send for Mrs. Masham to go to the Queen before all that company, that I resolved to avoid that " she writes. "When the time came I went into the closet and told the Queen I had not sent for Mrs. Masham, for I thought it would make a disagreeable noise when there were bishops and ladies of the bed-

chamber waiting without, that Her Majesty did not care to see, and that she might send for Masham herself to her to come to St. James's at what time she pleased." To this the pliant Queen agreed, and left the death chamber leaning on the arm of the duchess who so far had triumphed over her rival. But as Her Majesty went through the rooms and galleries of Kensington Palace from which the courtiers had been ordered to retire, she called for her hood which was brought by Mary Hill, Abigail's sister. As the Queen took it she whispered a few words which the duchess imagined was a kind message to Mrs. Masham, who, she says, "had not appeared before me at Kensington, but upon the alarm of the Queen being to go with me to St. James's Palace, she came into the gallery with one of her ministers, the Scotch doctor Arbuthnot to see Her Majesty pass. Notwithstanding the Queen's affection for the Prince, at the sight of that charming lady, as her arm was on mine, I found she had strength to bend down towards Mrs. Masham like a sail; for in passing she went some steps nearer to her than was necessary. And when that cruel touch was over, of going by her with me, she turned about in a little passage room and gave orders about her dogs and a strong box. When we came to my coach, she had a very extraordinary thought as it appeared to me; she desired me to send to my lord treasurer and to beg him to take care and examine whether there was room in some vault to bury the Prince at Westminster and to leave room



for her too. I suppose it was where her family, kings and queens had been laid, but in case there was not room enough for the Prince and her too, she directed another place for him to be buried in."

With drawn blinds they drove to St. James's Palace, where news of the Queen's loss had already reached, and where she was received by her silent and sorrowful servants, and led to her apartments by the duchess who gave her a cup of broth, a kindness her grace did not neglect to mention. She also says, "That very day he (Prince George) died, she (the Queen) eat three very large and hearty meals, so that one would think that as other persons' grief takes away their appetites, her appetite took away her grief."

It was whilst Her Majesty was at one of these very large and hearty meals, that her grace entered the room to find Abigail actually standing near the Queen whom she endeavoured to comfort. The bedchamber woman fled on seeing the duchess; but her flight was not taken in the humble manner she had sometimes affected, says the duchess, "but with an air of insolence and anger. I attended the Queen upon this affliction with all the care that was possible to please her, and never named Mrs. Masham to her. She would make me sit down, as she had done formerly, and make some little show of kindness at night when I took my leave; but she would never speak to me freely of anything, and I found I could gain no ground. Not to be wondered at, for I never came to her but

I found Mrs. Masham just gone out from her, which at last tired me, and I went to her seldomer."

The Prince died on October 28th, 1708, in his fifty-fifth year, and was buried in the Stuart vault near Henry VII.'s Chapel in Westminster Abbey, on November 13th, the funeral, which was attended by all the ministers and officers of state, taking place in the evening by torch light. Notwithstanding the duchess's hints to the contrary, the Queen was so overcome by grief for her loss, that according to Cunningham the historian, "she could scarcely endure the light." For three months she lived in seclusion nursing her sorrow, holding no drawing-rooms, and never venturing abroad. Peter Wentworth, who on the death of the Duke of Gloucester was appointed equerry to Her Majesty, in writing to his brother Lord Raby on January 4th, 1709, says, "The Queen now sees company once a week in her bed chamber, in a chair by the bedside, goes to Chaple every Sunday and holy day, so that she begins to appear in publick pretty much." In another letter written a week later he refers to the addresses sent by both Houses of Parliament to Her Majesty in which they begged "she would not indulge her past sorrow so much as to decline the thoughts of a second marriage"; in which "all their hopes of happiness did consist." Her Majesty's dignified reply to this suggestion was, that she had taken sedulous care for the Protestant succession, "a proof of my hearty concern for the happiness of the nation; but the subject of the addresses is of that

nature, that I am persuaded that a more particular answer is not expected." The town made merry over the solicitude of Parliament for Her Majesty's second marriage, and a broad sheet was cried about the streets called "The Hasty Widow, or the Sooner the Better." "There was nothing in the paper but a parcel of proverbs," says Peter Wentworth, "but the impudence was the title and coming out after the address to the Queen." In another letter he tells that Her Majesty has ordered "prayers for her having children to be put out of the Prayer Book and used no more." The same gossiping authority writing on April 5th, 1709, says "All that goe to Court here are in as deep mourning as ever, which you may observe from a Gazett which give leave to all persons that has not admittance to her person to go out of mourning; even that's report to have been publish't without the Queen's perticular order, and 'tis said she has been angry at it, but I believe that only proceeds from an order that the Queen gave last friday, that noe lady should be admitted to come into the Chapel at St. James's that had any colour'd handkerchiefs or anything of colours about them, for she said to lord chamberlain that there was ladys that came into the very face of her with those colour'd things and she would not suffer it in her house. Some say the Duchess of Marlborough's daughters have set the example to these ladys that have given offence; and this puts me in mind of the observation among the ladys, on the first night the Queen saw company upon her bed,

that the Duchess of Marlborough was the only one that had powder on her hair, or a patch on her face ; ” a means of showing her disregard for the outward appearances of sorrow.

The duchess who expresses little sympathy for the Queen and infers that Her Majesty's sorrow was not profound, had discovered that soon after the Prince's death, his widow used to sit in the rooms where he formerly worked at carpentering, and that were still full of his tools ; her choice of the apartments being made—according to her grace—not from any sentimental motive, but because they communicated with Abigail's apartments by a back stairs, by which the new favourite could secretly introduce Harley and such other Tories as she pleased, to converse and advise with Her Majesty. The duchess declares herself amazed at the discovery, “and when I spoke to her of it,” she says, meaning the Queen, “she seemed surprised, just like a person who on a sudden becomes sensible of her having done something she would not have done, had she duly considered.”

On the last day of June 1709, the Queen went to Windsor, but instead of taking up her residence at the Castle, installed herself in a house near it which she had purchased before she came to the throne. That she considered it cooler and more convenient, were reasons for her selection in which the prejudiced duchess did not believe, her conviction being that the Sovereign remained there that she might secretly receive Abigail's friends and her grace's enemies ; foremost amongst

whom were Harley, who was ever ready to represent the growing discontent of the nation at the prolonged wars which cost England so much blood and money, and echo the popular cry "that the Queen was reduced to bondage by a single family, the members of which monopolised the honours and wealth of the State."

Towards the end of August, Peter Wentworth writes to his brother : " The Queen sent for the Dutchess from London to present Bell Davers (on being made a bed-chamber woman) till when her grace had not been there since the Queen was at Windsor. The town talk as if the Dutchess has thoughts of resigning the Groom of the Stole, and that upon the condition lady Sunderland shou'd succeed her, but they say the Duke of Sommersett contess the matter for his Dutchess wch is what keeps the Dutchess of Marlborough from quitting. 'Tis certain the Dutchess has not nor does not designe to be much at Windsor, but I believe the talk of her resigning is nothing but town talk. Her house in the Friary advances prodigiously, 'tis now a covering."

Though the duchess absented herself from the Court, she continued to write long letters of remonstrance and reproof to her Sovereign. Some account of these was forwarded to the duke who still continued a war of which the Queen and her people were growing more and more tired ; and he, always moderate and prudent, advised his wife to discontinue a correspondence which could only lead to a further estrangement.

" I shall say very little to you concerning the Queen's

letter which was by no means obliging," he writes to the duchess on August 19th; "but if you can't regain her affections, that matter will continue as it now is. I would go upon all-four to make it easy between you; but for credit, I am satisfied that I have none; so that I would willingly not expose myself; but meddle as little as possible." A few days later he ends another letter with an advice which was not likely to be taken: "Be obliging and kind to all your friends and avoid entering into cabals," he says; "and whatever I have in this world, if that can give you any satisfaction, you shall always be mistress of, and have the disposing of that and me."

However, in obedience to his wife, the general wrote to the Sovereign complaining of her treatment of the duchess; on which the much-hectored Queen replied to him, "You seem to be dissatisfied with my behaviour to the Duchess of Marlborough. I do not love complaining, but it is impossible to help saying on this occasion, I believe nobody was ever so used by a friend as I have been by her ever since I came to the Crown. I desire nothing but that she would leave off teasing and tormenting me, and behave herself with the decency she ought, both to her friend and Queen, and this I hope you will make her do."

But this, neither he nor any one else had power to do, for the duchess continued to badger Her Majesty in the same manner, and in October, the month when the Queen wrote the letter just quoted, her grace

hearing that one of the bedchamber women was dangerously ill, and fearing some friend of the hated Abigail might be appointed in her place, wrote to claim the nomination of Her Majesty's servant. The Queen coldly replied that the duchess need not have been in such haste, for the bedchamber woman was pretty well again and she hoped she might live a long while ; but if she died, due consideration would be given as to who should fill her place, "and I believe nobody—nay even yourself if you would judge impartially—could think it unreasonable that I should take one in a place so near my person, that were agreeable to me," writes the Queen.

She continues, "I know this place is reckoned under your office, but there is no office whatsoever that has the entire disposal of anything under them, but I may put in any one I please when I have a mind to it. And now you mention the Duke of Somerset again, I cannot help on this occasion saying, that whenever he recommends anybody to me, he never says it is his right, but he submits to my determination." The letter concludes with the sentence, "I am ashamed to send you such a blottish scrawl, but it is so late that I cannot stay to write it over again." This communication is indorsed by a comment of the duchess which says, "This is a very odd letter, and a very extraordinary thing to make her excuse to me for writing a very fine hand ; it would have been much more excusable to have been ashamed of the change in her style."

At the Queen's return to town, the duchess waited on her to demand certain apartments in St. James's Palace, which would enable her to have a more commodious entry to her own suite of rooms, and which she said had been promised her. The Queen, who intended these lodgings for Abigail's sister, declared no such promise had been given ; on which followed one of those altercations now common between these former friends.

"But supposing that I am mistaken, surely my request cannot be deemed unreasonable?" said the duchess hotly.

"I have a great many servants of my own and some of them I must remove," replied the Queen pacifically.

"Your Majesty then does not reckon Lord Marlborough or me among your servants?" queried the duchess, eager for the fray. Embarrassed by the question Her Majesty murmured an inaudible reply, on which the duchess went on, "Some of my friends having pressed me to wait oftener upon your majesty, I have been compelled in vindication of my conduct, to relate the usage which I have received from your majesty ; and for this reason I have been under the necessity of repeating and asserting the truth of what I said, before they could be induced to believe it ; and I believe it would be thought still more strange, were I to repeat this conversation and inform them, that after all Lord Marlborough's services, your majesty refused to give him a miserable hole to



make a clear entry to his lodgings ; I beg therefore to know whether I am at liberty to repeat this to any of my friends." The Queen replied in the affirmative ; on which the duchess hoping that her Sovereign would reflect on all that had passed, flounced from the royal presence.

A few days later and she sought the Queen once more, this time with a fresh grievance that filled her with indignation, for news had reached her that a friend of Abigail's named Mrs. Abrahall, a royal laundress, had on falling ill been allowed a bottle of wine a day and had her wages raised. It would seem incredible that this should rouse a storm of anger in the duchess's mind, but for the motive she assigns to the Queen's benevolence. "The secret of the matter was," she writes, "that this woman had served Mrs. Masham when she lay in, and could not attend the Queen herself, to carry messages to her majesty." The Sovereign must therefore be called to account for rewarding such a person.

As the duchess in her late interviews with Her Majesty had become so excited as to allow her loud-voiced arguments to be heard in the ante-rooms, the Queen dreaded her visits. On this particular occasion Lord Dartmouth was told by Mrs. Danvers, who was in waiting on the Queen, that the duchess reproached the Sovereign "for above an hour with her own and her family services, in so loud and shrill a voice that the footmen at the bottom of the back stairs could hear her ; and all this storm was

raised for the Queen's having ordered a bottle of wine a day to be allowed her laundress, without having acquainted her grace with it. The Queen seeing her so outrageous got up to have gone out of the room ; the duchess clapped her back against the door, and told her she should hear her out, for that was the least favour she could do her, for having set and kept the crown upon her head. As soon as she had done raging she flounced out of the room and said she did not care if she never saw her more ; to which the Queen replied very calmly, that she thought the seldomer the better."

A result of this violent interview was a letter from Her Majesty to the duchess, dated October 26th, 1709, in which she said, "It is impossible for you to recover my former kindness, but I shall behave myself to you as the Duke of Marlborough's wife, and as my Groom of the Stole."

On receiving this the duchess sat down to her desk, to draw up a long narrative of the beginning and progress of their friendship, of the favour with which she had been honoured, and the good use she had made of it, and of her losing it through the wicked artifices of her enemies, "particularly of one whom I had raised out of the dust"; for like those of her temperament she could not see that her own blamable conduct was the cause of her loss. The account was interlarded by extracts regarding the duties of friendship from Bishop Taylor's "The Whole Duty of Man," and with directions

concerning reconciliation before receiving the Sacrament, from the Book of Common Prayer. With this narrative a letter was written and sent to the Queen in which the duchess said, "I will never so much as presume as long as I live to name my cousin Abigail, if you will be pleased to write me word in a very short letter that you have read this history, which is as short as I could make it, and that you continue still of the same opinion you were as to all your unjust usage of me. You will know all I have writ is exactly the truth, and I must desire that you will be pleased to do this before you receive the Holy Sacrament."

The admonished Queen replied that when she had time she would read all the papers and send an answer; but apparently she never found leisure to devote to them, for no reply was ever made. But soon after when she was about to receive the Sacrament in St. James's Chapel, "she looked with much good nature and very graciously smiled upon me," says the duchess, who adds, "But the smile and pleasant look I had reason afterwards to think, were given to Bishop Taylor and the common prayer book and not to me."

In the winter of 1709 the Duke of Marlborough was back in England, having in the September of that year won the victory of Malplaquet, which cost the lives of twenty thousand Englishmen. Though a solemn thanksgiving was returned at St. Paul's for this event, the duke could not help seeing that this long and tedious war, continued at great expense and severe loss of life, and of little advantage to England,

was becoming more and more unpopular, and that he himself was losing public favour ; on which he desired to strengthen his position and increase his power. He therefore asked the Queen to make him Captain-General for life, adding that the war would probably continue during their time. Her Majesty, who had been hoping for peace, was alarmed by this request, and took refuge from a positive refusal by saying she would require time to consider the matter.

Unwilling to grant the great general a power which his enemies said would have made him another Cromwell, and anxious to avoid offending a man already possessed of so much influence, Her Majesty hit on a happy plan of shifting the onus of a personal refusal to the shoulders of others. Accordingly when the Lord Chancellor Cowper next waited on her, she quietly asked him, "In what words would you draw a commission which is to render the Duke of Marlborough captain-general of my armies for life?"

Lord Cowper was instantly alarmed lest the Queen had already given a promise which would hand the nation over to a military dictator ; and on his expressing himself warmly on the subject, she bade him "talk to the Duke of Marlborough about it." This the chancellor did without delay, when he assured the general "he would never put the great seal of England to any such commission." The Queen, always timid, now dreaded the effect of her refusal to the duke's request ; when to support and soothe her, Harley secretly summoned such peers as were

known to resent and oppose the Marlborough influence ; and on the question being raised as to what action should be taken if the general resented the Queen's decision, the Duke of Argyle promptly replied, " Her Majesty need not be in pain, for he would undertake, if ever she commanded him, to seize the Duke of Marlborough at the head of his troops, and bring him before her dead or alive."

There was no need however to put this fiery threat into execution ; for the duke merely showed his disappointment by writing an imprudent and querulous letter to the Queen, in which, says Coxe his biographer, he not only reproached Her Majesty for this instance of disregard to his services, but even complained bitterly of her estrangement from the duchess and the transference of her attachment to Mrs. Masham, and announced his determination to retire at the end of the war.

A fresh course of friction soon afterwards sprang up between Her Majesty and the duke, when on the death of the Earl of Essex, in January 1710, the Queen desired that his post as colonel of his regiment might be given to Jack Hill, "a man," says the Duchess of Marlborough, "who had been basely ungrateful to me who raised him ; and whose sister Mrs. Masham, the duke well knew was at this time undermining the interest of himself, his family, and friends." The Marlboroughs believed that the proposed promotion of Abigail's brother was intended as a mortification to themselves ; and that Her Majesty's request would

place the duke in a constrained position ; for if he agreed, dissatisfaction must arise amongst his officers at having a younger and less experienced man appointed above their heads ; whilst if he refused the old outcry would be raised that the Queen was a mere cypher, a slave to the Marlborough family.

After some consideration the duke waited on Her Majesty to represent how prejudicial it would be to her services to have so young an officer preferred above others of higher rank and longer service, besides showing the world the extraordinary favour she felt for Mrs. Masham's brother ; but the only answer he received was that he would do well to advise with his friends." Lord Godolphin then tried his powers of persuasion on the Sovereign, but without better effect.

A Council was held on the 15th of January, from which the duke absented himself, a fact that failed to draw the slightest comment from the Queen, who was probably aware that he had gone to the great lodge at Windsor in discontent. The duchess says the news of his withdrawal made a noise in town, and many spoke to Her Majesty of the ill consequences of mortifying a man who had done her such important services, to which she answered they were fresh in her memory and she had as much kindness for him as ever. From Windsor the duke wrote to her asking her to reflect on what the world must think "who have been witnesses of the love, zeal, and duty, with which I have served you, when they shall see that after all I have done, it has not been able so protect me against the malice of a bed-

chamber woman. Your Majesty will allow me on this occasion to remind you of what I writ to you the last campaign, of the certain knowledge I had of Mrs. Masham's having assured Mr. Harley, that I should receive such constant mortifications, as should make it impossible for me to continue in your service." He concluded by saying that "the many instances I have had of Your Majesty's great change to me, has so broke my spirits, that I must beg as the greatest and last favour, that you will approve of my retiring, so that I may employ the little time I have to live, in making my first acknowledgments to God, for the protection he has been pleased to give me."

His threat to retire had been so frequently made that it failed to alarm the Queen; and by this time it was no doubt plain to her, that as his own and his wife's salaries amounted to about ninety thousand a year, it was unlikely that they who valued money so greatly, would resign posts for which they were so handsomely paid. However in answer to the duke's letter she wrote saying he had no grounds for his suspicions or her unkindness, and desiring him to return to town. At the same time she bade Lord Godolphin tell him he might dispose as he pleased of the post made vacant by Lord Essex's death.





## CHAPTER V

Ministers consult about a Bedchamber Woman—The Queen dreads the Loss of Abigail—Her Secret Petition to Her Tory Friends—What Peter Wentworth has to say—Common Discourse of the Town—Her Majesty slighted by the Duchess of Marlborough—Her Words repeated and exaggerated to the Queen—Desires to wait on the Sovereign—Her Majesty's Dread of an Interview—The Duchess hurries to Kensington Palace—Is admitted to the Royal Presence—Interview and Conversation with the Queen—their Final Parting—Insolent Letter from Her Grace—The Queen determines to dismiss Lord Sunderland—The Duke and Duchess beg Her to retain Him—Her Majesty's Reproach to the Duchess—Who forwards Her Some Private Letters—The Queen's Brief Reply—Lord Dartmouth receives the Seals of Office—His One Great Defect—Lord Godolphin sends William Penn with a Message to the New Secretary of State.



## CHAPTER V

THE Duke of Marlborough on returning to town was received with friendliness by the Queen ; but a few days later Her Majesty was alarmed by a report that "the victorious army commanded by the Duke of Marlborough was getting up a petition in order to place him in a life-long command," and that her Whig Ministers were about to move an address in Parliament for the removal of Abigail from her service.

Whatever doubt there may have been regarding the first part of this rumour, there was none concerning the latter ; for however extraordinary it may appear, it was certainly true that the great Ministers of State met privately and held grave councils regarding a bed-chamber woman. Amongst them all, Lord Sunderland distinguished himself by his advocacy of violent measures ; whilst true to his character, the Duke of Marlborough urged moderation, and declared it would be unconstitutional to force the Queen to abandon her favourite.

Her Majesty's dread lest Abigail should be taken

from her, drove her to consult her Ministers' opponents, when separately and with secrecy the Tory peers, and Jacobites who had been averse to the Revolution, were brought to her. In his *History of Great Britain* Cunningham says that the Queen begged "that they would be mindful of their duty to her, and neither to agree to any petition from the army which the Duke of Marlborough should present to Parliament, nor suffer Mrs. Masham to be taken from her." And, in parting from each, she earnestly said, "If ever any recommendation of mine was of weight with you, as I know many of them have been, I desire this may be especially regarded."

Though these conferences were private, news of their object soon spread abroad, when the Duke of Marlborough waited on Her Majesty "to clear himself from the calumnies of his enemies," and assure her he was unaware the Army had any intention of petitioning Parliament to make him Captain-General for life. The invaluable correspondence of Peter Wentworth reflects the gossip of the town on these movements of the Court. Writing to his brother on January 24th, 1710, he says—

"Upon the Duke's coming to town his friends report all is well and right again, but others talk as if there was great matters in agitation such as the Queen can never consent to. 'Tis certain there's a great Hurly burly at Court, but the particular accusations 'tis impossible for me to learn, at least not saft for me to writ, however I'll venture to tell you what

common report says, vis, that Ld. M—— insists upon his being sole General during the Queen's and his joint lives, and the Dutchess of Ormond, Lady Fretcheville, lady Hide, Coll Masham, and Mrs. Masham together with their brother and sister be immediately remov'd from Court. This they say has not a little alarmed the Queen, who is said to be so much astonished at it that she has frequent consultations with the Contrary party what to do in so nice a conjuncture, and that the General officers has been sounded by both Sides to discover what they wou'd do if things shou'd come to extremitys.

"If these things comes to be more common discourse, I'll venture to writ more at large. It has been talk't as if yesterday was to have been the day to have mov'd for an address in the House of Commons to the Queen, to have had Mrs. Masham removed from Court, and all this sessions they say the House of Commons was never fuller, so 'twas not thought a proper time to move what they were not sure of carrying. . . . Whether the party adverse to Mrs. Masham had any such designe, I can't say, but this am asure of that the Queen gave the Vice Chamberlain Cook orders to tell all her friends in the House of Commons, that is to say all that had any dependant, that any such address wou'd be very disagreeable to her.

"The Court is still in deep mourning" adds this gossip "wearing Coffs upon their coats sleeves, wch will be till Lady day, and no Arms upon the Coaches ;

the rule for the morning of this year is to be as for a Father. Long pockets for the summer were liked to have obtain'd being an universal fashion, but this Winter its totally out again, and theres no but young fellows in the Army and the Smarts of them that wears those coats with bottions up the arms."

Writing three days later the same correspondent says, he hears the duke is all submission to Her Majesty's pleasure, but he "cou'd not forbear telling her he had a fresh instance of his enemies imposing falsities upon her for truths against him, such was their making her believe he or any of his friends had made any interest among the members of the House of Commons to Adress her majesty for the removal of Mrs. Masham, wch he protested as he was an honest man he never thought of, and if her Majesty wou'd be pleased to tell him who inform'd her so, if he did not convict them of untruth, he wou'd be content to be banisht her favour for ever, and begged hard that that might be made a test, who was to be believed, he or them. He said she knew he had mov'd it to her majesty, as what he thought wou'd be for her service and for the ease of her Ministry, but it never entered into his thoughts to stir up the Parliament to prescrib to her what servants she shou'd keep about her person. . . .

"'Tis said the Queen has been so provok'd as to declare to more than one, she has been so slighted by the Dutchess of Marlborough, that she can't indure the sight of her. . . . I am told that the Queen has

said to the Duke that the nation wanted a Peace, and that it behoved him to make no delays in't."

This remark was probably made to the duke when he went to take leave of Her Majesty before going to conduct the war abroad. At this final interview he begged that she "would permit his wife to remain in the country as much as possible, and that she would be pleased to accept of her resignation in favour of her daughters, when the peace was made." The Queen readily granted the first part of his request, and the duchess assuming that the second was also agreed to, waited on the Queen to return thanks for the advancement of her daughters; but Anne received her with sullen glances and such coldness of manner as would have awed another courtier. The duchess however asked if the duke had mistaken Her Majesty's meaning, when the reply was given her "I desire that I may never more be troubled on the subject."

The courtiers, quick to notice the setting of one favourite and the rising of another, now began to neglect the duchess and to follow Mrs. Masham, much to the mortification of the one and the triumph of the other. "Mrs. Masham is now visited in crowds by Whigs and Tories, some of whom I have heard wish her damn" writes Peter Wentworth in September 1710. "For my part I hadn't the courage to go with the crowd yet, because I know she reckons me in the number of those that rail'd at her, tho' I never did."

Though the Duchess of Marlborough was unwilling

to resign her profitable places at Court, she withdrew from town and was at this time occupied in guarding the interests of the Whig ministers, in quarrelling with Sir John Vanbrugh about the building of Blenheim, or in ordering brocades and velvets from patterns sent her by Lord Manchester, English Ambassador at Venice, with which to furnish the palace or Marlborough House.

But in the midst of such business, news reached her that reports of angry and indiscreet words she had used regarding the Queen, had been repeated and exaggerated to the royal ear. Evidence remains that her violent temper and rash tongue led her to speak contemptuously of the Queen ; Lord Dartmouth amongst others saying that " she used to entertain her confidants with telling them what a praying godly idiot the Queen was " ; and he adds that her grace was wise enough to think they would keep such a secret for her ; but Lady Fitzharding, " who could not keep her secret in King William's time, was as little disposed to do it in Queen Anne's."

But as a story never loses anything by being repeated, especially by a courtier, it was probable that the duchess's abuse of her sovereign was magnified. As an example of this her grace says it was stated, that when she and the Duchess of Somerset were about to stand sponsors for an infant to whom the name of the Sovereign was to be given, she—the Duchess of Marlborough—had said, " There never was any one good for much, of that name ; I will not stand for the babe if she is called Anne."



What really happened was explained by the duchess in the following words : "At the christening of the child of Mrs. Meredith, I was pressed very much to give the name, which properly it was the place of the Duchess of Somerset to do ; at last to end the dispute, it was agreed by all that the child should have the Queen's name. After this had been settled, I turned to the Duchess of Somerset and said to her in a smiling way, 'That as the Duke of Hamilton had made a boy a girl and christened it Anne after the royal godmother, why should we not make this girl a boy and call her George?' The Duchess of Somerset laughed at it, as I dare say the Queen herself would have done if she had been present. But this was represented to the Queen in as different and false a way as possible, as I heard afterwards from very good hands."

At news of these misrepresentations the impetuous duchess immediately resolved to return to town, intrude on the Queen, and vindicate herself from such charges. Her Majesty, however, fearing a repetition of those turbulent scenes which had marked their recent interviews, failed to show an equal eagerness to see the duchess, who then wrote to request that her Sovereign would give her half an hour's audience before she retired into the country. To this came a royal reply asking her to put what she had to say into writing. The duchess was unwilling to comply with this request, for she hoped that a personal appeal and explanation would have a better effect with Her Majesty ; therefore

she answered that her communication "was of a nature that rendered writing it impossible," and named three several hours, during which she knew the Queen was usually alone, as suitable for their meeting. Her Majesty, however, coldly refused to see her at such times, but appointed six o'clock the next afternoon for the visit; that being, as the duchess remarked, "the hour of prayers, when she could least of all expect to be at leisure for any particular conversation."

Before the appointment could be kept the Queen wrote once more to the duchess, desiring her, as the latter says, "to lay before her in writing whatever I had to say, and to gratify myself in going into the country as soon as I could." These repeated refusals must have sorely tried the proud spirit of one accustomed to receive implicit obedience from her royal mistress. They also strengthened her determination to gain her wishes at all cost of dignity. Accordingly she wrote again urging that an hour's leisure might be given her, and stating "that when her majesty should hear what I had to say, she would herself perceive it impossible to put things of that nature into writing; that I was now going out of town for a great while, and perhaps should never have occasion to give her a like trouble as long as I lived.

"The Queen refused it several times in a manner hard to be described, but at last appointed the next day after dinner. Yet upon further consideration it was thought advisable to break this appointment; for the next morning she wrote to me to let me know that she

should dine at Kensington, and that she once more desired me to put my thoughts into writing."

The duchess at last seems to have grasped the reason of the Queen's refusal to see her ; for in her next letter, after having begged leave to follow Anne to Kensington, "I assured her majesty that what I had to say would not create any dispute or uneasiness (it relating only to the clearing myself from some things which I had heard had very wrongfully been laid to my charge) and would have no consequence, either in obliging her majesty to answer, or to see me oftener than would be easy to her ; adding that if that afternoon were not convenient, I would come every day and wait, till Her Majesty would please to allow me to speak to her."

Without waiting for a reply which she feared would contain a refusal, the duchess hurried to Kensington Palace determined on seeing the Queen. Details of what followed are given by her grace in the Account of her Conduct ; in a letter addressed by her to Mr. Hutchinson ; and in some MS. pages amongst the Coxe papers in the British Museum, from which the following is compiled.

On reaching the Palace the duchess found the Queen had just dined, the royal dinner-hour being about two o'clock ; and as there was no one in waiting to announce her, she asked the page of the back stairs if it was not customary for him "to scratch at the Queen's door when anybody came to see her?" When he had answered in the affirmative, she desired he would give the customary scratch and ask whether Her Majesty

would please to see her then, or whether she should come some other time.

The page stayed longer than was usual ; long enough she thought to give time for deliberation as to whether she should be received or not, and to settle "the measures of behaviour," if that favour were granted. Meanwhile she who had been accustomed to gain admittance to Her Majesty at all hours, awaited the reply with impatience, seating herself on a window-ledge "like a Scotch lady waiting for an answer to a petition."

At last the page returned to say the Queen would receive her. As she entered the royal presence she saw that Her Majesty, who was alone, was seated at her desk. Showing some embarrassment, probably due to fear, she said to her visitor : "I was going to write to you."

"Upon what, Madam?" promptly queried the duchess.

"I did not open your letter till just now, and I was going to write to you," remarked Her Majesty who was given to repetition.

"Was there anything in it, Madam, that you would have a mind to answer?" her grace asked.

"I think there is nothing you can have to say but you may write it," replied the Queen coldly.

"Won't Your Majesty give me leave to tell it you?"

"Whatever you have to say you may write it," said the Sovereign.

"I believe," answered the duchess, checking her

indignation, "Your Majesty never did so hard a thing to anybody as to refuse to hear them speak—even the meanest person that ever desired it."

"Yes, I do bid people put what they have to say in writing, when I have a mind to it," came the royal response.

"I have nothing to say, Madam, upon the subject that is so uneasy to you : that person (Mrs. Masham) is not that I know of, at all concerned in the account that I would give you which I can't be quiet till I have told you," the duchess said.

"You may put it into writing," repeated the Queen.

But the duchess, unwilling to lose this long-sought and hardly gained opportunity of speaking her mind, hurried to say there were those about Her Majesty who charged her with uttering things of which she was no more capable than of killing her own children ; that she seldom mentioned Her Majesty's name in company, and never without respect ; on hearing which the Queen contemptuously turned aside and said, "There are many lies told."

In order to make her interview the shorter, and her innocence the more apparent, her grace requested that the Queen "would be pleased to let her know if anybody had told her anything of her of that nature, that she might then take an opportunity of clearing herself, or begging Her Majesty's pardon," on which Anne, referring to an expression in the duchess's letter, that she did not wish for a reply,

remarked, "You said you required no answer and I will give you none."

The duchess persisted and assured her Sovereign it was but reasonable to enforce her just request, adding that she would not ask the names of the authors of the calumnies spoken against her ; but the only reply she received was, "You desired no answer and you shall have none," words which were repeated over and over again. "It is probable," comments the duchess, "that this conversation had never been consented to, but that Her Majesty had been carefully provided with those words as a shield to defend her against every reason I could offer."

They could not, however, act as a shield against the duchess's persistence, for striving to suppress her fury, she went on to say she was confident Her Majesty would not treat her with such harshness if she believed her only desire was to do herself justice and not ask a favour ; on which, foreseeing a storm which her timid nature feared, the Queen moved towards the door exclaiming, "I will quit the room."

"When she came to the door," says the duchess, "I fell into great disorder ; streams of tears flowed down against my will and prevented my speaking for some time. At length I recovered myself and appealed to the Queen in the vehemance of my concern." The appeal was a repetition of what the duchess had already said so many times in writing and by word of mouth ; her former friendship for Her Majesty, the faithfulness with which she had served her, the zeal shown for

her service and security, her unflinching candour, the whole winding up by another request to know what was laid to her charge ; in answer to which came the same reply, "You desired no answer and you shall have none."

"Will Your Majesty then make me some answer at any other time?" enquired the duchess, boiling with scarce suppressed rage. But once more came the reply, "You desired no answer and you shall have none"; on which the duchess, flaming with anger, and no longer able to control herself, said, "I am confident you will suffer in this world or the next for so much inhumanity." To this the Queen calmly replied, "That is my business." The duchess then hurried from the royal presence and sat in the long gallery where she remained some time whilst her passion cooled and her tears were dried. Then with the wonderful insistence that marked this indomitable woman, she returned to the room she had just quitted and "scratched at the door." It was opened by Her Majesty and they stood face to face, anger and indignation in the eyes where friendship and trust had once shone. After a second's hesitation, the duchess began, "As I sat in the gallery I thought Your Majesty would not be easy to see me when you come to the Castle at Windsor, whither I understand you are shortly to remove. Should that be the case, I will refrain from going to the Lodge, that I may not be charged with a want of respect for omitting to pay my duty to Your Majesty when so near." To this speech, which

the Queen was unwilling to accept as conciliatory, she answered "You may if you please come to me at the castle ; it will give me no uneasiness."

From this remark the duchess inferred that the Queen would not refuse to see her in public, but that she would not endure the trial of another private interview. The duchess then departed, and these two, once the closest and dearest of friends, met in this world no more.

Her grace, however, was not aware that this interview, which took place on Good Friday, April 6th, 1710, was to be their last : for on the following day she wrote to the Queen asking permission to wait on her concerning "a matter of life or death." Her Majesty's curiosity to learn what this might be, was not so great as her fear of another meeting, which she immediatly wrote to decline. The duchess then sent her a letter written by the duke, giving an account of a man then on his way to London who "had been guilty of many vile practices at Vienna, and was a very great villain," and whom the duke desired might not be admitted to see the Queen, but be sent out of England immediately.

In forwarding this communication the duchess eagerly seized the opportunity of haranguing her Sovereign. Her own letter enclosing her husband's, neither contains the slightest apology for her parting words, nor regret for the result of her visit, but expresses an insolence that is astonishing even in coming from her. The original letter, which may be



found in the Coxe MSS. in the British Museum, runs as follows.

"There was something very unusual in the manner of the last conversation I had with your majesty," it begins, "in your declaring you would give no answer to whatsoever I said ; and in the disorder that appeared by your turning from the candle when you thought I was going to mention something that you did not care to hear of, that I can't but think you are ashamed of the company you generally have, and sensible of the ill consequences of having such a favourite, and of the reflections that are made all over the town upon it, since 'tis certain that nothing your majesty ever does, can be a secret ; if then there can be a pleasure in anything one is ashamed to own (for which I have no taste) I am sure you will pay very dear for it. I never yet heard of any prince that kept little company that was not of course unfortunate. . . .

"What I now say, is for no private interest, nor with any particular regard to myself ; I only wish you would choose such people to converse with, as would keep your character from falling in the opinion of your subjects ; and besides the interest you would have in it, you would find it much more easy to pass your time in such a way as to have no need of any disguise.

"I beg you Madam for your own sake, to think what the world must say, upon your showing that your real confidence and kindness is gone from those that have done you much true service (and that have so

much respect paid them at home and abroad) to Mrs. Masham, her sister, and a Scotch doctor, and others one is ashamed to name; and in short to anybody that will make court to her (Abigail) who must always be contemptible wretches, since they can condescend to such lowness in order to compass their ends with your majesty."

This letter, which was forwarded to the Queen who had returned to town, was answered from Kensington Palace in a single sentence. "I received yours with one enclosed from the D of M," the Sovereign wrote, "just as I was coming downstairs from St. James's, so could not return the enclosed back, till I came to this place."

By this time Her Majesty had determined to rid herself of a faction that virtually exercised all the powers of monarchy, and in whose hands she had been from the beginning of her reign but a mere puppet. For the Duke of Marlborough represented his Sovereign abroad and swayed the councils of the Continental states; his duchess dominated the Court; whilst their friend and connection, Lord Godolphin, with the aid of his Whig ministers, managed the Parliament. And all three had controlled her actions, and forced into her councils men whose principles and manners were alike objectionable to her.

Aided by friends, amongst whom were the Dukes of Somerset and Shrewsbury, her maternal uncle Lord Rochester, and her adviser Robert Harley, the Queen now considered herself strong enough to break a connection which had become a bondage.

Her first important step in this direction was to dismiss from his office of Secretary of State, the Duke of Marlborough's son-in-law Lord Sunderland ; a man whose Republican tendencies had been distasteful to her, whose behaviour to his Sovereign had bordered on insolence, whose efforts to introduce into Parliament an address to remove Abigail from her service, she had not forgotten, and whose violent temper and aggressive manner had frequently offended his own colleagues.

Rumour of this intention brought the bitterest mortification to the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough. "If I were to make the choice," writes the former, "I would much rather be turned out, than Lord Sunderland should be removed ; so that I hope all my friends will struggle with all their might and power ; for if this point be carried, there is nothing disagreeable and ruinous but must be expected." And in another letter addressed to the Duke of Shrewsbury, who he hoped would persuade the Queen to keep the Secretary in his place, the duke says : "'Tis not his relationship to me and the kindness I have for him, that concerns me so much as the effect it may have on the Queen's service and the public ; for as such a step will generally be thought to be aimed at, and must of course reflect upon me, it will in a great measure render me incapable of being useful to her majesty's affairs either at home or abroad."

Instructed by the Duchess, Lord Godolphin hastened to the Sovereign to represent the ill effects her determination would have on the great General "when the

fate of all Europe depends upon his being encouraged and heartened," to which she calmly replied, "the Duke of Marlborough is too reasonable to suffer a thing of this kind to do so much prejudice to himself and to the whole world, by taking it to heart; and surely nobody knows better than the Duke and yourself, the repeated provocations which I have received from Lord Sunderland."

As may be imagined, the duchess was not idle meanwhile, for a furious letter addressed to the Queen was sent by her grace to the duke, with orders to copy, sign, and forward it immediately to Her Majesty. This violent epistle found its way into the fire, and a more temperate letter was written instead, which said, "I did flatter myself no body could have prevailed with you to carry your resentment so far against him in my absence, as is mentioned in your letters, and to give me so great a mortification in the face of all Europe at a time when I was so zealously endeavouring to serve you at the hazard both of my reputation and of my blood; but tho' any consideration of me were wholly out of the case, I should hope for your own sake you would suspend any further resentment in this one matter, till I have the honour to see you, and opportunity of thoroughly examining and reasoning upon it with your majesty."

Such a communication as this must have seemed poor and weak to the fiery duchess, who unable to restrain herself any longer, wrote the Queen a letter described by Coxe as "a long and acrimonious remonstrance."

This once more referred to her own truth and honesty, her husband's zeal and merits, the affection formerly shown by Her Majesty to both, the ill usage she had recently given them ; and then spoke of the mortification Lord Sunderland's removal would be to the duke. From this she proceeded to dwell in insulting language on Abigail, whom she considered the sole cause of her own loss of favour, and threatened the Queen that a fresh movement would be made by parliament to remove so objectionable a person from her service. She next gave her frank opinion of the Duke and Duchess of Somerset, once her friends but now, as she considered, her enemies; and to show the opinion once held of the Queen by his grace, who at this time enjoyed the royal favour, she enclosed a confidential letter he had written her, in which he referred with little ceremony to Her Majesty. She likewise sent the Queen several letters the latter had addressed to her years previously, expressing an ardent affection which was contrasted with the coldness now shown her, and requested that they might be returned.

Her Majesty in reply, briefly reproached the duchess for breaking her solemn promise of never speaking to her again of politics or of Mrs. Masham. "But I shall trouble you with a very short answer," said the Queen, "looking upon it to be a continuation of the ill-usage I have so often met with, which shows me very plainly what I am to expect in the future." As to the Duke of Somerset's confidential letter, and her own affectionate correspondence which the duchess had the

bad faith and insolence to send, the Queen merely remarked in a postscript : " I do not return the letters, knowing they can be of no use to you ; but must desire all my strange scrawls may be sent back to me, it being impossible they can now be agreeable to you."

On receiving this note the duchess rushed once more to her desk, to tell Her Majesty she thought herself justified in breaking her promise not to refer to politics or to Abigail, because the Queen had not read the long lecture she had sent her the previous October, and given her a precise answer ; she next referred to the dreadful account Abigail might be called on to render to the nation, for the advice she had given, which threatened to ruin a man who had won six pitched battles and ten sieges, and then continued, " I hasten to the latter part of your letter in which you desire that all the letters I have of yours, may be sent back, and give the reason for it, because 'tis impossible they can now be agreeable to me ; but though your majesty takes care to make them less pleasure to me than I once thought they would have been, I cannot yet find it in my heart to part with one. And though I cannot dispute your keeping your own letter that I sent you, I can the more easily spare it, because I have drawers full of the same in every place wherever I have lived. Yet I much wondered at your majesty's keeping the Duke of Somerset's, which I only sent to show what he once thought of the Duke of Marlborough's services ; 'tis not surely usual to detain another body's letters."

Finally came an appeal regarding Lord Sunderland.

"My concern for Lord Marlborough's honour and reputation in the world," she wrote, "and the great trouble he expresses on this occasion, brings me to beg your majesty upon my knees, that you would only defer this thing till there is peace, or an end of the campaign; and after such an expression your majesty can have no doubt of my ever entering into anything that can displease you."

The Queen took no notice of this letter, with which, all direct correspondence ceased between them.

Her Majesty was still resolute in her desire to rid herself of Lord Sunderland, and on June 13th, 1710, wrote to Lord Godolphin, "It is true indeed that the turning a son-in-law out of his office may be a mortification to the Duke of Marlborough; but must the fate of Europe depend on that, and must he be gratified in all his desires, and I not in so reasonable a thing as parting with a man whom I took into my service with all the uneasiness imaginable, whose behaviour to me has been so (objectionable) ever since, and who I must add, is I believe, obnoxious to all people except a few. I think the Duke of Marlborough's pressing so earnestly that I should delay my intentions is using me very hardly; and I hope both he and you, when you have considered this matter more calmly and impartially, will not wonder that I do not comply with his desires." Two days later Lord Sunderland was dismissed. On the Queen offering him a pension to soothe his disappointment he declined it, saying, that "if he could not have

the honour to serve his country, he would not plunder it."

No sooner was Lord Sunderland dismissed, than Lord Dartmouth was appointed in his place as Secretary of State. Swift describes the latter as a man of letters, full of good sense, good nature, and honour, of strict virtue and regularity of life ; adding that he "laboured under one great defect—that he treats his clerks with more civility and good manners, than others in his station have done the Queen." And no sooner had the seals of office been given him, than Lord Godolphin sent the Quaker, William Penn, to assure him nobody approved better of the appointment than he did, "though it was not decent in regard to Lord Sunderland, to make public demonstrations of any satisfaction upon that occasion."

Lord Dartmouth soon became the friend and confidant of that lonely and harassed woman Queen Anne, who held long talks with him ; many of her opinions being given in his valuable notes to Burnet's history, which "the blabbing Bishop," as he was irreverently called, altered and modified to please the wishes and spare the faults of those whose favour and interest he desired.



## CHAPTER VI

The Duke of Marlborough writes to the Exiled Queen  
—Her Majesty's Answer—Lord Godolphin is dismissed—Flings His Staff of Office into the Grate—The Duchess of Marlborough is enraged—Plot to punish Her Majesty—Is forbidden the Court—Endeavours to frighten the Sovereign—Her Estimate of the Queen—Threatens to publish Her Majesty's Letters—The Duke of Shrewsbury is employed to recover Them—Why Their Publication was prevented—The Duke of Marlborough's Return—He is advised to get rid of His Wife—Interview with the Queen—Brings a Penitent Letter from the Duchess—Her Majesty is determined to deprive Her of all Her Offices—Mortification of the Duke, Who throws Himself on His Knees—The Queen demands the Gold Keys of Office—Which the Duchess flings at Her Husband's Head—A Glimpse at the Ducal Household—The Duchess abuses Her Sovereign—The Duke thinks there is no Help for it—The Queen complains of Her House being pulled to Pieces.



## CHAPTER VI

**I**N his voluminous "History of Great Britain," Macpherson makes a statement founded on the examination of the Stuart papers, to the effect that the Duke of Marlborough, on learning of his son-in-law's dismissal, allowed his passion to overcome his natural caution; and in order to triumph over his enemies and revenge himself on the Queen, immediately wrote to the Duke of Berwick (son of King James), offering his services in placing on the throne, the youth who was known to some as James III., and to others as the Pretender. Although, says the same authority, the exiled royal family had previously been disappointed in him, they resolved to treat his offer with attention and apparent confidence; besides which they feared that if he were slighted, he would attach himself to the House of Hanover. A correspondence passed between the Duke and the widow of James II., in which she begged him to retain his command of the Army as being most serviceable to her son's cause, and concludes a long letter printed by the historian, in which she says—"You desire us to apply to Mrs.

Masham, the new favourite of the Princess Anne. How can we my lord, apply to a stranger? Mrs. Masham owes us no obligations. She has neither pledged her faith, nor promised her assistance. You have repeatedly done both my lord; and now it is in your power to place my son in a condition to protect yourself."

The Duke unwilling to compromise himself, diplomatically assured the Court of St. Germain's that patience only was necessary to establish James III. upon the British throne; and their hope that this would be brought about, was largely placed on Lord Godolphin, whose attachment to the House of Stuart had never abated, though it had been kept secret because of his natural timidity. A blow to these expectations was therefore struck when, on August 6th, 1710, the Queen dismissed her Lord Treasurer. Her motives for this were conveyed to him in a brief letter which said, "The uneasiness you have showed for some time, has given me very much trouble, though I have borne it; and had your behaviour continued the same as it was for a few years after my coming to the crown, I would have no dispute with myself what to do. But the many unkind returns I have received since, especially what you said to me before the lords, makes it impossible for me to continue you any longer in my service; but I will give you a pension of four thousand a year; and I desire that instead of bringing the staff to me, you will break it, which I believe will be easier to us both."

On receiving this letter Lord Godolphin hastened to the Queen to remonstrate with her, and asked if he might continue in his office as treasurer; but weary of the lectures and reprimands she had continually received from him at the dictation of the duke and duchess, Her Majesty was firm in dismissing him; on which he returned home, broke his staff of office and flung it angrily into the grate. A few days later and his son Lord Rialton, who was the duchess's son-in-law, was deprived of his post as cofferer to the Crown.

All appointments held by the Whigs were filled by Tories, by whom the Queen meant to surround herself; a proceeding that enraged the duchess, who conceived a fresh means of outraging Her Majesty. No mention is made of this in the Account of her Conduct, but is dwelt on in the series of private letters written by her to Sir David Hamilton, one of the royal physicians, who originally owed his post at Court to her grace. The obligation he was under, and the friendliness he felt towards her, had made him endeavour to restrain her anger at the dismissal of Lord Sunderland, and to suggest a tactful behaviour, by which it was hoped she might regain favour with the Queen, whose confidence he had obtained by his good sense and courteous manners.

When therefore the duchess was falsely charged by Dean Swift, in No. 16 of the *Examiner*, with purloining twenty-two thousand a year during the eight years in which she had acted as Mistress of

the Robes, she wrote a letter vindicating herself from this gross accusation, addressed to Sir David, with instructions to submit it to the Queen. When he had done so, and Her Majesty had read it, she remarked, "Everybody knows cheating is not the Duchess of Marlborough's crime." Taking hope from this reply, her grace next asked him, to convey her offer to the Sovereign to attend her whilst she tried on some new robes that had been ordered for her by the duchess as Groom of the Stole ; but the Queen instantly charged him to prevent her grace from coming to Court, adding with her usual timidity, that he was not to say she refused to permit the duchess's attendance.

It was then that her grace, seeing she was forbidden the royal presence, put into action the plan already referred to of humiliating and plaguing Her Majesty, by a threat to publish the letters she had written in the fulness of her affection to her beloved Mrs. Freeman.

This plot is nakedly revealed to Sir David in a letter written to him by the duchess. There was a servant, she said, in an humble station, but in waiting near the royal person, with whom Her Majesty often gossipped, and who agreed with the duchess that nothing succeeded with the Sovereign but fear or flattery, "for which reason," says the writer, "he pretended he would fright the Queen about the letters I had in my power, and give her to understand 'how unwilling he should be to fall out with one that could

do so much hurt as I might do Her Majesty,' adding 'he feared that her provocations would make me print her letters, for that I had a great spirit, and was justly enraged to be in print for such lies as I had been.' The Queen ordered this man to write me a letter to Windsor, and send it by a messenger on purpose. He was to desire me 'as a friend not to do anything that might reflect on Her Majesty, insinuating that there was still room for reconciliation with her and me.' And to carry on the matter more successfully, I writ all my letters to him with a design he should show them to Her Majesty, who thinking I knew nothing of her seeing any of my letters, and as her mind loved to manage such a secret with any one in a low station, I so ordered it that I might say what otherwise could not have been told to her."

A concluding paragraph in this letter shows the duchess's estimate of one who had given her unbounded affection and loaded her with favours. "I am afraid," says the duchess, "you will have a very ill opinion of me that could pass so many hours with one I have just given such a character of; but tho' it was extremely tedious to pass so many hours where there could be no conversation, I knew she loved me, and I suffered much by fearing I did wrong when I was not with her. I have gone to the Queen a thousand times when I had rather been in a dungeon."

Sir David was now dragged into this plot between a servant and a duchess, for the purpose of frightening their Sovereign; when on the one hand he protested

against the publication of these private letters, and on the other represented to Her Majesty the danger of provoking such an imperious woman. It was probably owing to her threats, that the duchess was permitted to keep her places with the handsome salaries attached to them.

Meanwhile the Queen, who was determined not to suffer the presence of a woman who had so grossly insulted her, and who daily feared the world would be given her foolish and affectionate letters, many of which referred to incidents in the previous reign and severely commented on the late sovereigns, had recourse to the Duke of Shrewsbury, whose tact and courtesy were proverbial, and employed him to recover her communications. All his arts failed however, for the duchess refused to part with them, though she ultimately consented not to print them until the duke returned. News of this affair flew about the town causing indignation everywhere. In a letter dated November 28th, 1710, contained in the Bolingbroke correspondence, Secretary St. John says, "I had almost forgot to tell you an instance of the admirable temper in which the great man is likely, on his return, to find his wife. Among other extravagancies she now declares she will print the Queen's letters—letters writ whilst Her Majesty had a good opinion of her, and the fondness for her, which her violent behaviour since that time has absolutely eradicated."

On the duke's return no more was heard of this disgraceful threat. Sir Robert Walpole, then coming



into notice, assured Lord Dartmouth, it was he who prevented the publication of the letters, "by his telling her she would be tore to pieces in the streets if she did." For the duchess, because of her ungrateful conduct and her avariciousness, had become as unpopular with the people as their Sovereign was popular. Lord Dartmouth adds, "But she showed the Queen's letters to everybody, till Arthur Maynwaring a great favourite of hers, told her she exposed herself more than the Queen; for they only confirmed what the world thought before, that Her Majesty had always been too fond of her."

The Duke of Marlborough arrived in London on December 28th, and immediately paid a formal visit to Her Majesty at St. James's Palace, when personal or business affairs were avoided. At the second interview, the Queen said "I am desirous you should continue to serve me, and will answer for the conduct of all my ministers towards you," adding, "I must request you would not suffer any vote of thanks to you to be moved in parliament this year, because my ministers will certainly oppose it." The duke answered that he should always be ready to serve Her Majesty, if what had recently passed did not hinder him.

The desire the Queen expressed, and the coldness of her manner, must have wounded the general; but the words of his advisers were doubtless still more mortifying to him. What these were we learn from a letter of Secretary St. John, dated January 23rd,

1711, in which referring to Marlborough he says, "He has been told by the Duke of Shrewsbury, by Mr. Harley, and by your humble servant, that since the Queen agrees to his commanding the Army, it is our duty and in the highest degree our interest to support him if possible, better than he ever yet was, and that he may depend upon this. . . . He was told at first that he had nothing to reproach us with ; that his wife, my Lord Godolphin, and himself had thrown the Queen's favour away and that he ought not to be angry if other people had taken it up. . . . He was told that his true interest consisted in getting rid of his wife, who had grown to be irreconcilable with the Queen, as soon as he could, and with the best grace which he could."

If this advice reached the ears of the duchess, the wrathful explosion which followed may be imagined ; it was, however, sufficient to show the duke the intention of the Court to deprive her of her profitable appointments. Before he would finally admit this unwelcome conviction, he employed his friend, Arthur Maynwaring, to sound Harley upon the subject, but the latter evaded all enquiries, to which he would merely answer, "That is the rock on which all will split, if care be not taken to avoid it." The duke also sought out Lord Dartmouth, as that peer relates, to remind him of their former friendship, and to hope "he would do him on that account, all good offices with Her Majesty, who he knew had entire confidence in him (Lord Dartmouth), which he was sincerely glad to see." In their conversa-

tion the duke "lamented the strange conduct of his wife, but declared withal there was no help for that, and a man must bear a good deal to lead a quiet life at home." He seems, however, to have gained little advantage from any influence Lord Dartmouth used on his behalf, and deeply grieved and mortified at the prospect of his wife's disgrace, he sought a private audience with the Queen on January 17th, 1711, and handed her a letter written by the duchess, probably at his command and dictation, for it contains no trace of her customary arrogance or anger, but is worded in a spirit of humiliation entirely foreign to her nature, but in keeping with his own.

"Though I never thought of troubling your majesty in this manner again," it began, "yet the circumstances I see my Lord Marlborough in, and the apprehension I have that he cannot live six months, if there is not some end put to his sufferings on my account, makes it impossible for me to resist doing everything in my power to ease him; and if I am still so unlucky as not to make use of any expression in this letter that may move your majesty, it is purely for want of understanding; for I really am very sorry that ever I did anything that was uneasy to your majesty.

"I am ready to promise anything that you can think reasonable; and as I do not yet know but two things in my whole life, that ever I did, that were disagreeable to your majesty, I do solemnly protest that as long as I have the honour to continue your servant, I will never mention either of those subjects to you, or do any one

thing that can give you the least disturbance or uneasiness. And these assurances I am desirous to give your majesty under my hand ; because I would not omit anything possible for me to do that might save my Lord Marlborough from the greatest mortification he is capable of, and avoid the greatest mischief in consequence of it, to your majesty and my country. I am with all the submission and respect imaginable, your majesty's most dutiful and most obedient subject and servant."

The Queen took the letter, but for some time refused to open it ; when, however, at the duke's repeated request she read it, her answer was, "I cannot change my resolution," adding that she must have back her gold keys as Groom of the Stole and Mistress of the Robes, which the duchess held. On this the duke, eager that his wife should retain her profitable places and her favour with the Queen, in the most moving terms spoke of the duchess's regret for the mistakes she had made, her willingness to offer reparation, their former friendship, his own services, everything which he thought might melt her ; but the Queen merely answered, "It was for her honour that the keys should be returned forthwith," and commanded that they should be brought to her within three days. The duke then threw himself on his knees at Her Majesty's feet, and entreated that at least ten days might be given him before the keys were required, "to concert some means of rendering the blow less mortifying and disgraceful," but the

Sovereign saw no reason why this request should be granted.

Before two days had passed, says the duchess, "the Queen sent to insist that her keys should be restored to her." But this was a more difficult task for the poor duke to perform than even Her Majesty was aware of, for the duchess refused to give them up. Accordingly when important affairs next forced him to wait on Her Majesty, he failed to return them ; on which the Queen positively refused to discuss any business until he brought her the keys from the duchess. He was therefore obliged to return home and demand the keys, which, heedless of her recent humiliation, the duchess still refused to surrender. He therefore "laid his commands on her" to produce them, when after a violent scene she flung them at his head. The historian Cunningham who relates this fact says, that glad to obtain them on any condition, the duke snatched them up and hurried with them to the Queen, who received them "with far greater pleasure than if he had brought her the spoils of an enemy." The same writer adds that "the duchess flew about the town in rage, and with eyes and words full of vengeance, proclaimed how ill she had been treated by the Queen."

A glimpse of what passed in the ducal household is given by Lord Cowper who visited it the following day. The duke was reclining on his bed, the duchess, seated beside him, whilst the company that had come to condole with them were seated in a circle, listening to the extravagant raillery of her grace concerning Her

Majesty. When opportunity offered, Lord Cowper cautiously whispered to the duke, "how surprised he was at all the duchess ventured to say against the Queen ; although he had heard much of her tempers this was what he could not have believed ;" to which his grace mildly replied, "That nobody minded what the duchess said against the Queen or anyone else, when she happened to be in a passion, which was pretty often the case, and there was no way to help it." What struck Lord Cowper most in her grace's remarks was, "That she had always hated and despised the Queen ; but as for that fool," pointing to her daughter, Henrietta Lady Rialton, who was crying bitterly, "she did believe that she had always loved the Queen, and that she did so still, for which she would never forgive her."

The duchess's anger was not so great as to prevent her remembering that some nine years previously, the Queen had offered her two thousand a year, which was then refused, but which she now thought fit to claim for the intervening time. She therefore forwarded Her Majesty a copy of the letter in which that generous proposal had been made, and before later favours had been bestowed, asking if the eighteen thousand pounds would be allowed her. To this the Queen consented, when the duchess forwarded her accounts of the Privy Purse, charging this sum, and writing at the end of them the sentence in which the money had been preferred ; so that, says the astute duchess, "when she signed them, she might at the



THE DUCHESS OF SOMERSET.





same time attest her own letter, and the offer she had made me of her own accord." Her Majesty on returning the bills wrote the words, "I have examined these accounts and allow them."

The accounts which the duchess made out must have sorely puzzled the Queen or her secretaries ; for her grace, in whom natural shrewdness supplied the place of education, had a method of dealing with figures that was all her own. Lady Bute, the daughter of her friend Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, we are told, often sat and watched the duchess "in the curious process of casting up her accounts. Curious because her grace, well versed as she was in all matters relating to money, such as getting it, hoarding it, and turning it to the best advantage, knew nothing of common arithmetic. But her sound, clear head could devise an arithmetic of its own ; to lookers on it appeared as if a child had scrabbled over the paper, setting down figures here and there at random ; and yet every sum came right to a fraction at last."

Her Court offices being vacant were given to those whom she heartily detested ; for the Duchess of Somerset was appointed Groom of the Stole and Mistress of the Robes ; whilst Mrs. Masham was given charge of the Privy Purse. Her Grace of Marlborough's dismissal did not end without a show of vindictiveness on her part ; for in vacating the apartments in St. James's Palace belonging to her offices, she ordered all the brass locks placed by her on the doors, and all looking-glasses to be removed

from them, and would have torn down the marble chimney pieces, if her husband had not interfered. This conduct so greatly incensed the Queen, that for a time she stopped the money supplies for the building of Blenheim, saying she "would build no house for the Duke of Marlborough when the duchess has pulled hers to pieces." It may be added that up to this time two hundred thousand pounds had been issued by the Royal warrants towards the erection of this palace.

## CHAPTER VII

Queen Bess's Day—Arrest of the Pope and the Devil—They are viewed by Dean Swift and the Town—The Duchess of Marlborough designs to keep Assemblies—The Remarks of a Country Gentleman—The Duke of Marlborough is accused of Peculations—And dismissed the Army—He writes to Her Majesty—Seeks the Friendly Services of Lord Dartmouth—Duels are fought—But very Odd Figures at Court—The Queen gives Prince Eugene a Sword—Plot against Her Majesty—The Duke of Marlborough intends to make a Ball—Abigail is made a Great Lady—The Queen's Concern for Her Brother—Who writes to Her—She consults the Duke of Buckingham—Abigail and the French Envoy—The Duchess employs Pamphleteers to abuse the Queen and the Government—And is libelled in Return—The Duke complains—Death of Lord Godolphin at St. Albans—The Duke of Marlborough goes into Exile—Cause of His leaving England—The Duchess's Farewell affronts to the Queen—Her Letters from Abroad—The Duke's Offers of His Service by Turns to the Court of St. Germain and the House of Hanover.



## CHAPTER VII

THE dismissal of the Duchess of Marlborough from Court, did not induce her husband to put into force his oft-repeated threats of resigning his posts and employments. Accordingly on March 4th, 1711, he took his leave of the Queen, and once more set out for The Hague, to continue the disastrous war which had been of little advantage to England, and of which the Tories and the bulk of the nation had become heartily tired.

During his absence political factions into which it is not necessary to enter, became extremely bitter, and had risen to fury on November 17th, the date of his return, generally known as "Queen Bess's day"; on which it had been the custom for years to carry effigies of the pope and the devil through the streets, and burn them at night amidst great clamour at the base of Elizabeth's statue near Temple Bar. On this occasion it was intended that the procession should be more exciting than usual, and it was stated that several Whig nobles had subscribed largely towards the purchase of additional effigies, that were

to represent the Tory ministers and to share the fiery fate of His Holiness and His Satanic Majesty, with the hope of inflaming the mob and creating a tumult, in order to show that the Tories, who were advocates for peace, were unpopular.

Fearing the riots that might follow on such an exhibition, the Government determined to prevent it. "Accordingly on Friday last," says a news sheet, "about Twelve o'clock at Night, some of Her Majesty's Messengers, sustain'd by a Detachment of Grenadiers of the Foot Guards with their Officer, were ordered to go to an Empty House in Angel Court Drury Lane, which being broke Open, they found in it the Effigies of the Devil, that of the Pope on his Right hand, that of a young Gentleman in a Blue Cloth Coat, with Tinsel Lace, and a Hat with a White Feather made of Cut Paper, seated under a large canopy ; as also the Figures of Four Cardinals, Four Jesuits, and Four Franciscan Fryars, and a large Cross about Eighteen Foot High, all which being put on Several carts, were about Two a'Clock in the morning carry'd to the Cock-Pit and there lodged in a Room between the Council chamber and the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Dartmouth's Secretary's Office." It may be added that the young gentleman who sported tinsel lace and a hat with a paper feather, represented "the Person who has pretended to disturb the Settlement of the Protestant succession."

The figures were on view for several days and were visited by the town, Swift, amongst others, flocking to see them and being disappointed to find that the

devil bore little resemblance to the lord treasurer Harley. "If I had been in London," says Peter Wentworth in writing to his brother, "I would have sent you some of the prints that have been publish't about the design'd procession of Queen Elizabeth's birthday. The figures that were taken are show'd at the Cock Pit, and I hear the Duchess of Marlborough has been to see them. The Duchess of Montagu and Lady Sunderland went there in a mob to have past for servant maids, but everybody knew them.

"They say," continues this worthy gossip, "the Duchess of Marlborough designs this winter to keep assemblies and live after a most magnificent manner at her new house; but I think she might be warned by the advise she had from a country Gentleman of about two hundred a year, who was made very drunk at her house at St. Albans, for it seems she has kept open house there all this summer; he told her, her entertainment was very noble and fine, and if she had lived so two or three years agoe it might have signified something, but now it wou'd signifie nothing."

Further reference to the figures which created such a stir amongst all classes, is made by Peter's mother, Lady Wentworth, who had the distinction of being a great-grandmother at the age of fifty-three. "Thear are aboundenc of storys goe about, but one very commical, it is that Dockter Gath went to Lord Darkmuth and told him he was sorry he must goe to law with him for breaking open his hous taking his goods out. Soe my lord askt what he ment; he

said the hous whear the imagis was taken from was his, and the Devell was his. My lord sayde he would return the Devel to him again. The Dr said he designed to make a great funurel for the Devel and have a sarment preached. My lord asked what the tex should be ; he said it was, that his desyples came in the night and stoal him away."

When on December 6th, 1711, the Queen opened Parliament, she declared in her speech from the throne, that she rejoiced to tell her faithful Commons "that notwithstanding the arts of those who delight in war, both place and time are appointed for the treaty of a general peace," and was certain no true Protestant or good subject would envy her the glory of ending a tedious and expensive war. In the debate which followed, the Duke of Marlborough was covertly censured for prolonging hostilities for his own interests ; to which he replied that his great age and his recent fatigues made him wish to enjoy repose "in order to think of eternity" ; but that he could not agree to the measures taken to gain a peace which he considered would be the ruin of Europe.

His support of the Whig party in their desire for a continuation of war, was followed by a damning charge made by the Tory party against the duke, of various peculations regarding contracts for bread and bread waggons for the Army. The duke immediately defended himself in a reply printed in the *Courant* ; letters of accusation followed, and a fierce paper war raged through the town. At a cabinet council held



on the last day of the year, the following entry was ordered to be made in its books : "Being informed that an information against the Duke of Marlborough was laid before the House of Commons by the commissioners of the public accounts, Her Majesty thought fit to dismiss him from all her employments, that the matter might undergo an impartial investigation."

The Queen wrote to break this news to the duke in a private note which he indignantly threw into the fire ; but in a calmer moment he sent her a letter saying, "Madam, I am very sensible of the honour your majesty does me, in dismissing me from your service, by a letter of your own hand, though I find by it that my enemies have been able to prevail with your majesty to do it in the manner that is most injurious to me. And if their malice and inveteracy against me had not been more powerful with them than the consideration of your majesty's honour and justice, they would not have influenced you to impute the occasion of my dismissal to a false and malicious insinuation, contrived by themselves, and made public, when there was no opportunity for me to give in my answer, which they must needs be conscious would fully detect the falsehood and malice of their aspersions, and not leave them that handle for bringing your majesty to such extremities against me."

In continuation he gave it as his opinion that the friendship of France, contemplated by peace, would prove destructive to Her Majesty, "there being in that Court a root of enmity irreconcilable to your majesty's

government, and the religion of these kingdoms"; and he concluded by hoping she might never find the want of so faithful a servant as he had endeavoured to be.

This letter not having the desired effect of reconciling the Queen to him, he once more sought the services of his kinsman Lord Dartmouth, and asked him to represent to Her Majesty "the inexpressible infliction it was to him to be under her displeasure; that he did not pretend to justify his own behaviour in all particulars much less his wife's; but as they were and ought to be her creatures, desired she would dispose of them any way she thought most for her service; which should be entirely submitted to, though she should think proper to have them transplanted to the West Indies." When this was repeated to the Sovereign, she replied she would never show any disfavour to the duke unless he forced her to do so; but she could not think his professions were sincere so long as he placed himself at the head of a party to oppose everything that was for her service. "Next day," adds Lord Dartmouth, "there was a report all over London that the Queen had made proposals to the duke which he had rejected."

On January 24th, 1712, the report of the commissioners against the Duke of Marlborough came before the Commons, when by a majority of over a hundred votes a resolution was passed "That the taking several sums of money annually by the Duke of Marlborough from the contractors for furnishing the bread and bread waggons, in the Low Countries,

was unwarrantable and illegal." The amount of the gratuities received by the duke from the contractors for bread, was estimated at sixty-three thousand pounds; whilst the percentage he had deducted from the payment of foreign troops, came to four hundred and sixty thousand pounds. An order was obtained to prosecute him, but was not proceeded with.

Amongst the many mortifications which he met with at this time, not the least bitter was a speech made in the House of Lords by Earl Poulett, who in the heat of a debate referred to "a certain general who led his troops to the slaughter, to cause a great number of officers to be knocked on the head in a battle, or against stone walls, in order to fill his pocket by disposing of their commissions." The duke heard this with silent contempt, but when the House rose he sent a message by Lord Mohun to the earl, inviting him to take the air in the country. On the latter asking if this were meant for a challenge he was told that the message required no explanation. Lord Mohun added, "I shall accompany the Duke of Marlborough, and your lordship would do well to provide a second. In the course of the day Earl Poulett's wife was led to suspect that some mischief was on foot, when she immediately wrote to Lord Dartmouth, asking him to order the Guards "to be ready upon two noblemen falling out." She adds that she will listen when Lord Mohun comes and will send a more speedy and exact account. In her next note, still preserved, this frightened wife says

"I listened and it is my Lord Mallbouro that has challenge my lord, by Lord Mohun. Pray let them be secured immediately. Pray burn my letters and send the very next gard att hand to secure my lord and Lord Mohun." Earl Poulett was accordingly placed under arrest, whilst the duke was forbidden by the Queen to proceed further in this affair.

Encounters of this kind were not uncommon, but one of the most violent duels was fought a few months later by the above-mentioned Lord Mohun, and the Duke of Hamilton. The latter, an intimate friend of the Queen's, was a staunch Tory, whilst Lord Mohun was a rabid Whig. He was likewise a man of dissolute life and drunken habits, and already had been twice tried for homicide; one of his victims being the unoffending Montford the player. A quarrel concerning property in Chancery brought the smouldering enmity of Mohun and the Duke of Hamilton to a head, when a challenge was sent by the former to his grace. Being accepted by him, they met one dull Sunday morning in November, on the marshy wastes of Hyde Park; the duke having his kinsman Colonel Hamilton for his second, while Mohun was supported by General Macartney. All four drew their swords at the same time, and fought desperately, but Colonel Hamilton quickly disarmed his antagonist, when looking round he saw Mohun lying on his back apparently dead, whilst near him lay the Duke of Hamilton face downwards. Flinging away his sword, the colonel rushed to his kinsman whom he lifted to

his feet, and as he was still living, was supporting him in his arms, when Macartney coming behind them, stabbed the duke who immediately fell dead.

A less fatal duel, which however caused great talk in the coffee houses, is mentioned by Peter Wentworth. "T'other day" he says in writing to his brother on March 9th, 1711, "the Duke of Argile had a duell with Coll Cout, who has a company of Guards. The accation on't was this; the Duke of Argile had a penny post letter sent him from an unknown hand that the night before his health was proposed to be drunk and that Coll Cout said, damn him he wou'd not drink the health of a man that had changed sides, and one that had sold his country for a shilling and wou'd sell his god for half a crown. Upon this letter the duke went to him to know if he had said any such thing; Cout said he was in drink, but cou'd not deny but he might have said some such thing; so they fought in Hide Park, the duke disarm'd him, and there's an end of the business; but some think it worth the duke's while to find out who the person was that sent him the penny post letter, for 'twas doubtfull whether 'twas a friend or an enemy."

The action of Parliament in dismissing and disgracing the Duke of Marlborough, does not seem to have greatly affected him; for on the visit to London of Prince Eugene, to endeavour to persuade the Government to continue the war, his grace was present at many of the great festivities given to the illustrious stranger who had shared his campaigns,

and whom Swift describes as "plaguy yellow, and literally ugly besides." An interesting letter from Peter Wentworth gives a glimpse of the town and of the part played by the duke at this time.

"The Whigs are pleased to give out," he writes on January 12th, 1712, "there was but very odd figures at Court on the Birthday. They gave out before that there would be very little company, and 'twas said the Queen would not come out; but there was as much fine cloaths as ever, and I thank God the Queen appeared both morning and afternoon as usual, and the next day had got no cold but was rather better then before, and a friday I was out with her to take the air in Hide Park.

"On her birthday she gave Prince Eugene a sword sett with diamonds, the Queen being to be carried in her chair from her dressing-room to the great Drawing-room, everybody but the ladies in waiting and my Lord Chamberlain was kept out of that appartment; but when the Queen goes in her chair 'tis my business to be there, so I saw my Lord Chamberlain come in with Prince Eugene alone and go into the dressing-room, and after staying 2 or 3 minutes he came out with the Sword the Queen had given him in his hand, and then pull'd off his own Sword and gave it to a page of the back stairs that stood at his elbow, and put on t'other."

The next paragraph refers to a dark rumour generally believed, and sufficiently credited by the timid Queen to cause her great fright, that the Duke of Marlborough

and the Whigs, whom she had put out of office, had entered into a plot to seize her person, and depose her in favour of the Electress of Hanover. It also supports a statement which Horace Walpole says he had often heard his father make, and which Lord Hertford told David Hume, "that towards the end of Queen Anne's reign, when the Whig ministers were turned out of all their places at home, and the Duke of Marlborough still continued in the command of the army abroad, the discarded ministers met and wrote a letter which was signed by Lord Somers, Lord Townsend, Lord Sunderland, and Sir Robert Walpole, desiring the Duke of Marlborough to bring over the troops he could depend upon, and that they would seize the Queen's person, and proclaim the Elector of Hanover regent. The Duke of Marlborough replied, 'It is madness to think of such a thing.'"

Peter Wentworth's letter shows that precautions were taken against this dreaded act. "There was better order kept this birthday than ever I saw," says he. "At night the Guards were doubled, some people affirm there was no occasion for't, but only to show their diligence and over and above care, and to cast an odium upon some people; but other people that pretend to know more say 'twas no work of supererogation, but what was absolutely necessary.

"'Twas talk't of as if the Duke of Marlborough intended to make a ball that night at his house, but when he found how it was took as a sort of vying

with the Court, he let it alone ; but the Duchess of Marlborough did send to several Ladies to invite them to a dancing a friday night. I know some ladies she invited, but that morning there was papers cry'd about the Street as representing it a design to sett up for themselves, that there was several people that had made cloaths for that day that had not for the birthday ; so they put off their Ball, but sent to all the Ladies they had invited, there wou'd be no dancing ; but that the Duchess wou'd be at home, and shou'd be glad to see any of them that wou'd come."

At this time the duchess's two daughters, Lady Sunderland and Lady Rialton, who were ladies of the bedchamber, resigned their posts : all four of the sisters were violent Whigs, and deeply resented the indignities their father suffered from the Tories. Bitter indeed must have been the mortification of the whole family when on May 24th, 1711, Robert Harley was created Earl of Oxford and Mortimer, and Abigail's husband was also made a peer. From Lord Dartmouth's interesting notes we learn that it had not been Her Majesty's intention to make her new favourite a woman of title. "I never," the Queen said to him, "had had the least intention to make a great lady of Abigail Masham, for by so doing I should lose a useful servant about my person, for it would give offence for a peeress to lie on the floor, and do all sorts of inferior offices."

Harley, however, wished to see his relative uplifted in the social scale, and his wishes prevailed with the



Queen, who, it appears, desired that Abigail should take her honours quietly ; for Lady Strafford writing to her husband in April 1712, says : " Lady Masham has not been with anybody or recceaved any visits this six weeks, and som says the Queen has order'd her to live very privately, that she may not get the envy of the Peaple like the Duchess of Marlborough."

Lord Dartmouth describes Abigail as " exceedingly mean and vulgar in her manners, of a very unequal temper, childishly exceptious and passionate." It must be stated, however, that his lordship was not in her good graces, because " he lived civilly with the Duchess of Somerset," as he was informed by Her Majesty. " At last," he continues, " Abigail grew very rude to me, of which I took no notice. The Queen gave me a hint of her suspicion, that she or her sister always listened at the door when I had a conference with Her Majesty. Abigail likewise showed some disrespects to the Duchess of Somerset, which gave the Queen a notion of making her a lady of the bedchamber, and thus laying her down softly."

Lady Masham's dislike to the Duchess of Somerset not only arose from her Grace's influence with the Queen, but because this influence was used to oppose Her Majesty's favour of her brother James Stuart, of whom Abigail was a devoted partisan ; for, notwithstanding the Sovereign's assurance to Parliament in the speeches written for her by her Ministers, that her chief concern was for securing the succession of the Crown to the House of Hanover, as years

passed and her illness increased, her thoughts became more and more fixed on her brother, to whom she would at her death willingly have yielded her sceptre. In her sympathy with him, in her desire to see him peaceably recognised as England's future King, she was aided by her uncle, Lord Rochester; by the Duke of Hamilton; the Duke of Ormond; by Lord Jersey, who had always been a Jacobite at heart, and had been sent by William to persuade the banished King to allow his son to be adopted by the reigning monarch; and by the Duke of Buckingham, whose wife was the daughter of Catherine Sedley and James II.

Nicholas Mesnager, the envoy sent by France to negotiate peace with England, states that such was Lord Rochester's "feeling of the inviolability of the line of ancient sovereigns, that although his own niece Anne, who was on the throne, persuaded him to aid her Government in the hour of her great need, he did not conceal from her his opinion that she had no lawful right to the crown she wore. He is even said to have told her so in plain terms; yet she appointed him the President of her Council. An apoplectic fit had snatched him away May 2nd, 1711, before any step could be taken for the accomplishment of his intentions." His death, Mesnager adds, was a great blow to the Stuart cause.

Before this happened, however, he had been the means of opening a correspondence between the Queen and her brother. In one of the letters written to his sister by James Stuart, dated May, 1711, and

preserved amongst the Stuart papers, he begins by saying, "The violence and ambition of the enemies of our family and of the monarchy have too long kept at distance those who by all the obligations of nature and duty ought to be firmly united, and have hindered us of the proper means of a better understanding between us, which could not fail to produce the most happy effects to ourselves, to our family, and to our bleeding country."

He continues by declaring he is resolved to break through all reserve, and tells her: "The natural affection I bear you, and that King James our father had for you till his last breath, the consideration of our national interests, honour, and safety, and the duty I owe to God and my country, are the true motives that persuade me to write to you, and to do all that is possible to come to a perfect union with you. And you may be assured, madam, that although I can never abandon but with my life my own just right, which you know is unalterably settled by the fundamental laws of the land, yet I am more desirous to owe to you than to any living, the recovery of it. For yourself a work so just and glorious is reserved. The voice of God and nature calls you to it. The promises you made to the King your father enjoin it. . . . I am satisfied, madam, that, if you will be guided by your own inclinations, you will readily comply with so just and fair a proposal as to prefer your own brother, the last male of our name, to the Electress of Hanover, the remotest relation we

have, whose friendship you have no reason to rely on or to be fond of, and who will leave the government to foreigners of another language, of another interest."

The letter concludes by an assurance that he will make the law of the land the rule of his government, that he will maintain the rights and liberties of the Church of England, and give such toleration to dissenters as parliament will permit.

The Queen was deeply moved on reading this communication, but knowing the difficulties that stood in her brother's way to the throne, and the perplexities that prevented her own wishes, she felt herself unable to act on his behalf. In this miserable state of mind she confided to the Duke of Buckingham, and dwelling on her brother's chances, said, "How can I serve him, my lord? He makes not the least step to oblige me in what I most desire. You know a papist cannot enjoy this crown in peace. But the example of the father has no weight with the son. He prefers his religious errors to the throne of a great kingdom. How, therefore, can I undo what I have already done? He may thank himself for his exclusion. He knows that I love my own family better than that of any other. All would be easy should he enter the pale of the Church of England. Advise him to change his religion, as that only can change the opinions of mankind in his favour."

In answer to these remonstrances, James Stuart wrote once more to his sister a letter remarkable for

its honesty in a time of universal deception. The pith of it is contained in the following sentences.

"Plain dealing is best in all things, especially in matters of religion ; and as I am resolved never to dissemble in religion, so I shall never tempt others to do it ; and as well as I am satisfied of the truth of my own religion, I shall never look the worse upon any persons because they chance to differ from me, nor shall I refuse in due time and place to hear what they have to say on this subject. But they must not take it ill if I use the same liberty as I allow to others—to adhere to the religion that in conscience I think the best. I may reasonably expect that liberty of conscience for myself which I deny to none."

The death of Lord Rochester was quickly followed by that of Lord Jersey, and a little later by the murder of the Duke of Hamilton, so that, by the fatality that seemed inseparably connected with James Stuart's destiny, three of his ablest and most earnest supporters were removed from the Queen, who now seemed unable to help him, and who complained of her Ministers, "I can never get one of them so much as to speak of him, or to answer me a question about him, and I don't press them, but I hope they will do as becomes them." But still all hope was not lost by those about her of seeing her brother on the throne, and before the French envoy Mesnager left England he had some interviews with Lady Masham regarding "the young gentleman's" prospects. In one of these

conversations Abigail told him that the Prince's condition gave Her Majesty secret uneasiness. "Nor was it all the misfortune. By the same necessity of state she was obliged, not only against her disposition, but even against her principles, to promote the continuance of her usurpation, not only beyond her own life but for ever." She added, it would be an inexpressible satisfaction to the Queen "to see herself delivered from the fatal necessity of doing so much wrong; and if it would be possible with safety to the religion and liberties of her subjects, to have her brother restored to his rights, at least after her decease, if it could not be done before. It was true the Queen did not see her way clearly through this, and it seemed next to impossible, for the rage and aversion of the greatest part of the common people to the return of her brother had grown to such a height."

When their final interview ended and Mesnager took his leave, he states in his "Minutes of Negotiation," from which the above particulars are taken, that he went away "wondering much within myself that such a mean character should be attributed to this lady, as some have made public; but I must add, that she seemed to me as worthy of the favour of a Queen as any woman I have ever conversed with in my life."

For a time it seemed as if the Duchess of Somerset, whose influence was inimical to James Stuart's cause, would be removed from Court, not through any influence or jealousy of Abigail's, but because the Tory government knowing herself and her husband, who was

Master of the Horse to Her Majesty, were Whigs, feared her grace would prejudice the Queen against themselves. The Sovereign however was bitterly opposed to parting with the duchess whom she valued as a kind and sympathetic friend. "If the Dutchess of Sommerset must out," says Peter Wentworth, "she will leave the Court with a very good grace, for everybody is pleased with her good breeding and civility; and I believe if her Duke had thought her what all the rest of the world thinks, capable of advising him, matters would not be as they are. Their case is the reverse of the Duke and Dutchess of Marlborough; in the eye of the world 'tis she has been the ruin of him, and he (the Duke of Somerset) the ruin of her." The duchess however was allowed to retain her office, though the proud duke who had managed to offend both parties lost his.

Meanwhile the Duchess of Marlborough was far from idle, though her activity was not productive of peace or good will to any man; for without the consent or knowledge of her husband, she wrote the anonymous letter to Abigail, a draft of which is amongst her grace's papers, and employed the pamphleteers and news writers—who could be found by the score at the coffee houses, and whose politics and principles obligingly agreed with those of their employers—to deluge the press with the grossest libels against the Queen and the Tory ministry. The result was obvious; for in return both herself and the duke were bitterly attacked, lampooned, satirised, and caricatured with all the mercilessness and indecency which the licence of the times permitted.

The duke's sensitive nature winced under these attacks of which he wrote to complain to Lord Oxford ; but his life was at this time made more bitter still by a threat of proceedings against him for the recovery of the amount he had derived from army contracts, which he, whilst admitting that he had received it, declared to be justifiable ; and by the fact that, as money was not forthcoming from the treasury for the building of Blenheim, the workmen employed and those who had lent certain sums for the purpose of carrying it on, the whole amounting to about £30,000, were encouraged to sue the duke for their claims which he refused to pay, as the Queen had undertaken to erect this palace.

He was also saddened by the death of his old friend Lord Godolphin, which took place on September 15th, 1712, at Holywell House, where he had been staying with the Marlboroughs. According to the duchess, when all his debts were paid, he left scarcely enough to bury him ; but that ceremony was conducted with much pomp, and for days his remains lay in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster Abbey, waiting until a sufficient number of Whig knights of the garter could be got together to act as his pall bearers.

Soon after he was laid to rest in the Abbey, the Duke of Marlborough suddenly quitted England with the intention of taking up his residence abroad. "I think," writes Lord Berkeley of Stratton to Lord Raby, on December 2nd, 1712, "the D. of Marlborough is gone at last. The reason is yet a mystery, and I have often reflected upon what a great minister told you concerning



him, which I cannot believe. The Duke stay'd at Sir Harry Furnesses (at Sandwich) for a wind, and now I hear Sir Harry is dead."

Time which clears many mysteries, revealed that concerning his sudden departure ; for both Dalrymple and Macpherson in their respective histories, mention its cause. From their accounts it appear that Robert Harley, Lord Oxford, believing the duke's presence dangerous to the Government, and productive of uneasiness to the Queen, determined that he should leave England. The means to effect this lay in the minister's hands. He therefore requested the duke to keep an appointment with him at the house of his brother, Thomas Harley, in St. James's Street, Buckingham Gate, which his grace did in the most private manner, coming at night in a sedan chair to the back door. It was then the minister showed the duke a letter written by him in 1694 to James II., warning him of the attack which was to be made by King William on Brest ; and told him that for his own security, and to end Her Majesty's fears, he must quit the kingdom.

Lord Oxford then obtained a passport for him, but not without some opposition from both parties, and the duke left England in November 1712. On hearing that he had gone, the Queen significantly remarked, "The Duke of Marlborough has acted wisely in going abroad." Before taking his departure the duke, always careful and cautious, had vested his estates in the hands of his sons-in-law, and had lodged fifty

thousand pounds in the Dutch funds, where it would be secure, no matter what change occurred in the English Government.

He then set out for Ostend on his way to Frankfort, where it was his intention to settle for some time, taking with him a suite consisting of two gentlemen, three *valets de chambre*, three footmen, a cook, coachman, postilion, helper, and grooms. The duchess was left behind until she could make arrangements for their prolonged stay abroad. That he was anxious she should join him, is shown by his letter to her written from Maestricht, February 5th, 1713; whilst the affection and perhaps awe with which he regarded her, are also revealed in the following extract.

"If you have observed by my letters that I thought you would have left England sooner than you have been able to do, I hope you will be so kind and just to me, to impute it to the great desire I had of having the satisfaction of your company. For I am extremely sensible of the obligation I have to you, for the resolution you have taken of leaving your friends and country for my sake. I am very sure if there be anything in my power that may make it easy to you, I should do it with all imaginable pleasure. In this place you will have little conveniences; so that we must get to Frankfort as soon as we can."

Her enforced exile must have been bitter to her proud spirit, that was now more hostile than ever to the Queen, whom she treated with some farewell affronts. In the early days of their affection Anne had given a

beautiful miniature portrait of herself framed in diamonds to her friend, who now tore it from its valuable setting, which she took care to retain, and gave it to a Mrs. Higgins, whose qualification for the gift lay in the fact that she held an humble post in St. James's Palace, through which news of this contemptuous act must spread. Mrs. Higgins took the portrait to Lord Oxford, who gave her a hundred guineas for it. The duchess's final insult to her Sovereign was to return the passport signed by the latter, saying that "if one signed by Lord Dartmouth were not sufficient she would depart without one." She reached Frankfort in safety, and from thence wrote the following letter to Robert Jennings, a solicitor and a relative, which with many others of her epistles is preserved amongst the original MSS. at Madresfield Court :—

"I am just come now from a window from which I saw a great many troops pass that were under the command of Prince Eugene. They paid all the Respects as they went by to the Duke of *Marlborough*, as if he had been in his old Post. The sight gave me melancholly Reflections and made me weep. . . . When I had write so far I was called to receive the honour of a visit from the Elector of Miance (Mayence). I fancy hee came to this Place chiefly to see the Duke of *Marlborough*. His shape is, like my own, a little of the fattest, but in my Life I never saw a Face that expressed so much Opennesse, Honesty, Sense and good Nature. Hee made me a great many fine Speeches,

which would not be well in me to brag of ; but I can't help repeating Part of his Compliment to the Duke of *Marl*, that he wished any Prince of the Empier might bee severely punished if ever they forgot his Merit ; and the Civillitys are so great that are paid him by all sorts of People, that one can't but reflect how much a greater Claim he had to all manner of good Usage from his own ungrateful country.

"It would fill a book to give you an Account of all the Honours don him as we came to this Place by the Elector of Sonnes and in all the towns, as if the D. of *Marl*. had been King of them, which in his case is very valuable, because it shews 'tis from their Hearts ; and if hee had been their King, hee might have been like others a tyrant."

In another letter she assures Robert Jennings she is not so uneasy as he imagines because time hangs so heavy on her hands, "which you may the easier believe because I us'd to run from the Court and shut myself up six weeks in one of my country Hous's quit alone"; but this does not mean that she would not now earnestly desire to see her friends "and to be in a clean sweet Hous and Garden tho' ever so small, for here there is nothing of that kind."

In a more melancholy letter dated June 9th, 1713, she says :—

"I know one must dye some time or other, and I really think the matter is not very great where it happens or when ; but if I could have my wish it would bee in England in a clean Hous where I might

converse with my children and friends while I am in the world ; but if that must not be I submitt, and I will own to you that I am not so much to be pittyd as some People, having never seen any Condition yet that was near so happy as 'twas thought. When I was a great Favourite I was rail'd at and flattered from Morning to Night, neither of which was agreeable to me ; and when there were but few women that would not have poysoned mee for the Happynesse they thought I enjoy'd, I kept the worst Company of any Body upon Earth, and had reason to be much more weary then of any that can happen.

"Still wee are like a Sort of banish'd People in a strang Country, and I could say something to every Part of my Life that would convince you that 'tis only a new Sceen of Trouble which few are free from in this World : and I thank God I can bear anything with some sort of Patience so long as I have the Satisfaction to know that I have not been the Occation of what is call'd so great a Misfortune Myself ; and why should not I bear with any misfortunes that happen to the whole Country as well as to me ? But the thought of this indeed is what touches me most, because that is for ever Destruction to me and all that I wish well to ; but for anything else it is not worth an Hour's Pains ; and I can eat."

At the time this letter was written, June 1713, an estimate of £60,000 was laid before the House of Commons for the completion of Blenheim, out of which £10,000 was granted. This does not seem to

have brought much satisfaction to the duchess, who, writing of the palace, says :—

“ But I can't think I shall ever live in it, and indeed I should be very well contented with the worst of my Country Hous's. These are melancholly Thoughts, but when I consider how much of my Life is passed, and how little there is in this World that is any reall satisfaction, I can bear with anything of this kind with more patience than you will easily believe.”

According to the Stuart papers, examined and quoted by Macpherson in his history of Great Britain, the Duke of Marlborough soon growing tired of his exile, sought to regain his former power in England. For this purpose “ he was willing to govern Anne by yielding to her prejudices ” regarding her brother. Accordingly he once more entered into negotiations with the Court of St. Germain's, wrote to King James's widow, and expressed his devotion to her son, declaring “ with an oath, that he would rather cut off his own right hand, than oppose his views on the throne. That providing he himself might be rendered secure, he would not hesitate a moment to use all his credit both privately and publicly for his service.”

But the duke's offer of his services, always backed by stipulations for his safety, had been too frequently repeated and too empty in results to affect the exiled family ; whilst it failed to regain him the favour of Queen Anne, whose timid mind had been so impressed by his supposed complicity in a plot to seize her person, that, according to more than one authority, the mere

mention of his name terrified and threw her into hysterics. He was therefore told, "she resolved never to give her consent to his return." In this way the Queen doubtlessly prevented the accomplishment of a wish that was nearest her heart.

Disappointed in his desire, resenting distrust of James Stuart, and the fears of the Queen, the duke who was a man of many resources, transferred his offers of zeal and duty to the House of Hanover, in a series of letters still preserved in the Hanoverian papers. In one of these written on November 30th, 1713, which with his usual caution "he begs may be burnt when read," he charges the Tory ministry with "intentions to bring in the Pretender"; as instances of which he pointed out the closer union of the Court with France since the establishment of peace, "the giving all employments military and civil to notorious Jacobites; the putting the governments of Scotland and Ireland into the hands of two persons who are known friends to the Pretender; the choosing the sixteen lords to serve for Scotland, of whom two were with the Pretender last summer and most of the rest declared Jacobites."

Finally came the strongest proof he was capable of giving of his loyalty to the House of Hanover, when he offered to lend money to the Elector "provided that the interest of five per cent should be regularly paid." It was suggested that this money should be spent in support of the Whigs and in harassing the Tory government and the Queen. As the Elector

would give no security either for the principal or the interest, the money was never lent.

In speaking of the duke after his death, Alexander Pope, who was well acquainted with the leading men of the day, says his grace's inconsistency in corresponding with the Courts of Hanover and St. Germain's at the same time, could be accounted for by his reigning passion, his absorbing love of money ; for by currying favour by turns with the Stuarts or the Guelphs, he hoped to secure his vast riches, under whichever king came to the throne. "He was calm in the heat of battle," says the same authority who is quoted in Spence's *Anecdotes*, "and when he was so near being taken prisoner in his first campagne in Flanders, he was quite unmoved. It is true he was like to lose his life in the one, and his liberty in the other ; but there was none of his money at stake in either. This mean passion of that great man, operated very strongly in him in the very beginning of his life, and continued to the very end of it."

Pope then tells a story supporting his statement. One day the Duke was looking over some papers in his *escritoire* with Lord Cadogan, when opening one of the little drawers he took out a green purse, and turned some broad pieces out of it which he looked at with great satisfaction, saying, "Cadogan, observe these pieces well, they deserve to be observed ; there are just forty of them ; 'tis the very first sum I ever got in my life, and I have kept it always unbroken from that time to this day."



## CHAPTER VIII

Queen Anne suffers—Unable to take Exercise—Anxiety regarding Her Brother—Refuses to sanction a Proclamation against Him—Will not allow the Elector of Hanover to reside in England—Baron Schutz is forbidden the Court—Writes to the Electress Sophia—The Queen's Letters to Hanover are published through the Agency of the Duchess of Marlborough—Tom D'Urfey is rewarded for His Doggerel Lines on the Princess—Sudden Death of the latter—The Duchess of Marlborough's Letter—Lady Masham taunts Lord Oxford—The Queen and Her Wrangling Ministers—Dismissed the Dragon—Her Majesty swoons at a Cabinet Council—Dreads another Meeting—Is found gazing at a Clock—Taken ill—Lady Masham writes to Dean Swift—And Peter Wentworth to His Brother—The Sovereign raves about Her Brother—Cabinet Councils are held—Secret Conclaves in Lady Masham's Apartments—Dr. Radcliffe is sent for—Queen Anne dies and George I. is peaceably proclaimed.



## CHAPTER VIII

**W**HILST these events were taking place, Queen Anne was suffering keenly both in mind and body. From the age of thirty she had been attacked by gout in her hands and feet ; and now when close upon her fiftieth year, that painful complaint continually threatened to attack a vital part and cause her death. Unable to take exercise and unwilling to deprive herself of the enormous quantities of food which her appetite demanded, she grew enormously stout and unwieldy, so that walking from one apartment to another became a task ; whilst, when at Windsor, she was conveyed from one floor to another in a chair hoist by ropes and worked by pulleys, which had done the same service for Henry VIII., since whose time it had remained at the Castle.

But the pain which afflicted her body was less than that which racked her mind, threw her into fits of gloomy foreboding, filled her eyes with tears, and banished sleep from those tedious and melancholy nights whose horrors affrighted her. For knowing that her life was drawing to a close, she was distracted between

the desire to see her brother come into his own, and the necessity which forced her to sanction the succession of the House of Hanover. Her conscience cried out to her to fulfil the promise she had made to her father, to obey his deathbed command; to make restitution to him for the part she had played in hastening his downfall by the foul charges she had made against his honour and the stain she had flung upon her brother's birth, by restoring the crown to the latter; whilst at the same time she dreaded lest his succession would entail a civil war between the subjects whose interests she had at heart, or deprive them of the civil and religious liberties which were dearer to them than life.

Always weak and vacillating, she hesitated to take a step on his behalf, or to countenance the Electress as her successor; and was only decided in one thing, her bitter abhorrence of seeing an heir to the throne in her dominions.

Acting in this wavering manner she had, when an address was presented to her in April 1714, by the House of Lords, asking that a proclamation be issued "to take the Pretender dead or alive," in case he ventured on British soil, answered that she did not see any occasion for issuing such, but would do so when necessary, and that the most effectual way to secure the succession of the House of Hanover, was to put an end to party jealousies; a reply that greatly offended the Whigs.

In return they suggested to Baron Schutz, the

Hanoverian envoy, that he should demand a writ summoning the Electoral prince who had been created Duke of Cambridge, to take his place in the House of Lords, or in other words to reside in England. The demand was accordingly made of Lord Chancellor Harcourt, who declined to give an answer without consulting the Queen, to whom he hastened. A Cabinet Council was immediately summoned when Her Majesty "exhibited every symptom of violence and passion," and declared in the most peremptory manner "that she would rather suffer the last extremities, than permit any prince of the Electoral family to come to Britain to reside during her life. That she considered the conduct of the envoy in the light of a personal affront ; and that she intended to solicit the Electress for his instant recall." At the same time she ordered the Master of Ceremonies to forbid his appearance at Court.

She furthermore expressed her sentiments in a letter to the Electress Sophia, dated May 19th, 1714, in which, addressing her as "Madam, Sister, Aunt," she says, "Since the right of succession to my kingdoms has been declared to belong to you and your family, there have always been disaffected persons, who by particular views of their own interest, have entered into measures to fix a prince of your blood in my dominions, even whilst I am yet living. I never thought till now that this project would have gone so far, as to have made the least impression on your mind. But (as I have lately perceived by public rumours, which are

industriously spread, that your Electoral highness is come into this sentiment) it is important with respect to the successors of your family, that I should tell you such a proceeding will infallibly draw along with it some consequences that will be dangerous to the succession itself, which is not secure any other ways than as the prince (Sovereign) who actually bears the crown maintains her authority and prerogative.

“There are here—such is our misfortune—a great many persons that are seditiously disposed; so I leave you to judge what tumults they may be able to raise, if they should have a pretext to begin a commotion. I persuade myself therefore that you will never consent that the least thing should be done that may disturb the repose of me or my subjects.”

Other letters to the same purpose were written to the Electress, whilst a note was also forwarded to the Electoral prince by the Queen, assuring him that nothing could be more dangerous to the tranquillity of the nation or more disagreeable to herself than his residence in England. These communications which the writer intended should be secret, were to her dismay made public a few weeks later. “One Mons. Boyer,” writes a correspondent of Lord Strafford’s, “has been taken up for conveying to the press those letters wch were said to be wrote by the Queen to the Princess Sophia and the Elector of Hanover, but whether they have dismissed him, or what they intend to doe with him, I cannot yet learn. I hope I shall not trouble your lordship with repetition if I

write you word how they came to be publick with us : it is said that the Electress communicated them to the Duke of Marlborough, as a great secret ; but that the Dutchess accidentally lighting on them thought it her duty to communicate a matter of so great consequence to one Mr. Boscawen, a Relation of hers in London ; who was so generous to communicate it to his friends, and they to theirs” ; by which manner the duchess secured a better mortification to Her Majesty.

The Electress Sophia of Hanover, now in her eighty-fourth year, was a woman of great intelligence and many accomplishments, who despite her years, preserved a gaiety of heart and sprightliness of manner. Though careful not to obtrude herself on Anne, the latter regarded her with jealousy which was turned to hostility when told that the Electress had said her great ambition was to die Queen of Great Britain, and have that fact recorded on her tomb. However, the Sovereign's anger at this remark was temporarily turned to laughter when Tom D'Urfey, a song writer of renown, repeated to her some doggerel rhymes on the Electress's ambition. It was Tom's duty and pleasure to amuse Her Majesty daily, when at the close of the royal dinner he was admitted to her presence, and taking his stand by the sideboard, rolled off political squibs, original verses, coffee-house epigrams, couplets, and various ballads. To these he added the following lines one afternoon—

### The Queen's Comrade

"The crown's far too weighty  
For shoulders of eighty,  
She could not sustain such a trophy,  
Her hand too already  
Has grown so unsteady,  
She can't hold a sceptre ;  
So Providence kept her  
Away—poor old dowager Sophy."

The Queen was so diverted by this doggerel that she immediately ordered Tom to be paid fifty pounds as a reward for his talent. Whilst this squib was still novel enough to amuse Her Majesty by repetition, news was brought that the Electress Sophia had died quite suddenly on June 9th, 1714, whilst walking in the gardens of Herrenhausen. Always active, delighting in exercise, and fond of work, she kept the infirmities of age at bay, and preserved her senses unimpaired to the last. The Duke of Manchester said, "there was a certain amount of mischief in her temperament, as there was of Jacobitism in her politics, and of looseness in her religious principles ; and there was no sport more excellent in her estimation, than in setting some clever unorthodox fellow to dispute on doctrinal questions and theology generally, with her chaplain, while she sat by enjoying the hard hits of the one and the embarrassment of the other, and not particularly caring which had the best or the worst of the argument."

It was generally rumoured by the Whigs, that the Queen's private letters, which, through the efforts of the Duchess of Marlborough, had been given to the



public, were the cause of the Princess Sophia's death ; a statement repeated in the following communication of her grace to Mr. Jennings, dated July 2nd, 1714.

"The poor old Electress just before she dyd, sent me the Copys of the Queen's Leter to her and to the Elector, and the Lord Treasurer's to her. They are all very extraordinary and I think them so much worth your seeing that I would send them but that I believe you will see them without paying the Postage. 'Tis thought at Hanover the Queen's Leter touched the old Electress so much that it hastened her Death. She was certainly very desirous of having her Grandson in *England*, and write very moaningly to severall upon the subject of the Queen's Leters, which I will say no more of, concluding that you have read them. I had not the Copy of Her Majesty's to the Elector, but I was asured that it was rather more furious against any of the Electors coming into England than those to the Electresse and young Prince."

Although "every new application to the Queen concerning her successor was a knell to her heart," there were those around her who continually urged her to take some step towards establishing her brother's right to the throne, when according to Macpherson's State papers, she consulted a bishop, supposed to possess the gift of foresight and prophecy, as to what would happen if she presented the prince to the privy council as heir to the crown : "Madam," his lordship answered, "You would be in the Tower in one month and dead in three," which alarmed her greatly. As

her health grew worse the Jacobite agents grew more bold and active ; visiting and holding council with Tory ministers and Stuart adherents; and enlisting both in England and Ireland, men who were ready and willing to fight for Her Majesty's brother. But on this latter fact being detected by Lord Wharton, a great commotion was made throughout the kingdom, the Hanoverian Court was alarmed, public feeling was excited, and at a cabinet council held on June 23rd, 1714, it was agreed that a proclamation offering a reward of five thousand pounds "for the apprehension of the Pretender, dead or alive if he were found in Great Britain or Ireland," should be issued.

On July 7th, 1714, the Queen dissolved Parliament, being anxious, it was said, to avoid discussions that might arise on the arrival from Hanover of Baron de Bothmar, to announce the death of the Electress, and probably to stipulate for the residence in England of the Electoral prince. Not only the Court, and Parliament, but the whole nation was at this time in a state of the greatest uncertainty and suspense, of fear and trouble of what the immediate future might bring.

And amongst those most active in intrigue, was Robert Harley, Lord Oxford. Considered by the Whigs to be favourable to the Stuart cause, and known by the Tories to be in correspondence with the Electoral family, he had long sought to deceive both parties without succeeding with either. Nor did his arts of cajoling the Stuarts and Guelphs by turns, obtain

the object for which they were practised—his retaining the office of Lord Treasurer or Prime Minister.

His favouring of the Hanoverian line caused a rupture between him and his cousin Lady Masham, who had always been a thorough supporter of James Stuart ; and for the same reason he gravely offended the Queen, who became anxious he should resign. To bring this about, Abigail did not hesitate to let the dragon, as she called him, have the benefit of her thoughts ; for at times she taunted him by saying, " You never did the Queen any service, nor are you capable of doing her any."

In her efforts to oust him from power, Lady Masham was assisted by St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, a young man of brilliant talents, fascinating manner, frank and decisive character, who was an ardent supporter of the Stuart cause. Between these ministers a bitter rivalry had sprung up, and frequently the sovereign, whilst moaning from pain, dreading agitation, and needing repose, was obliged to listen to the bitter attacks they made on each other whilst conducting business. " It was her office," Dr. Arbuthnot wrote to Dean Swift, " good naturedly to check the sneers of Harley and to soothe the indignant spirit of Bolingbroke. In their mutual altercations they addressed to each other such language as only cabinet ministers could use with impunity. Yet the dragon held fast with a dead gripe the little machine, or in other words, clung to the Treasurer's staff."

At length Her Majesty decided to deprive him of office at the request of the Court of St. Germain's, which, indignant at his duplicity, besought Anne, through the agency of Lady Masham, to dismiss him, as may be learned from the correspondence cited in the Duke of Berwick's memoirs. The ostensible reasons for this act given by the Queen to her Privy Council was, "that he neglected all business, was seldom to be understood; that when he did explain himself she could not depend upon the truth of what he said; that he never came to her at the time she appointed; that he often came drunk; lastly, to crown all, he behaved to her with bad manners, indecency, and disrespect."

In the beginning of July 1714, the Queen, who of late had suffered from fever, had gone to Windsor, but a couple of weeks later had come to Kensington Palace, where it would be more convenient for her ministers to wait on her regarding state business, one particular of which was the dismissal of Lord Oxford. This took place on the 27th of the month; and on the evening of that day a cabinet council was held at which she presided, to place his office in commission. No agreement could be arrived at regarding those suitable to that trust, the Jacobites and Whigs of which the council was composed, railing and wrangling in a disgraceful manner from about nine in the evening until two in the morning, when exhausted and alarmed the Queen fell into a swoon and was carried to bed.

On regaining consciousness she wept bitterly, and

was unable to sleep throughout the night; for the thought of another council to be held next day was before her, the perpetual contentions of which, she declared, would cause her death. Once more her ministers came together, discussed and disputed and separated without coming to a conclusion, which was postponed until the following day, Thursday, the 29th. This she told her confidential physician, Dr. Arbuthnot, she should never survive.

However, though the suspense and fear of meeting this council unstrung her nerves, she braced herself for the ordeal and rose that day. In the afternoon when Mrs. Danvers, one of her bedchamber women, accidentally entered the presence chamber, she was surprised to find the Queen there alone, and standing before a clock at which she gazed with a fixed expression of terror, that prompted the question as to "whether Her Majesty saw anything unusual there in the clock." Mrs. Danvers received no reply, but when the Queen slowly and mechanically turned towards her, the dazed and death-like look in Her Majesty's face caused the woman to cry out in alarm, when help coming, the Sovereign was immediately taken to bed.

Two letters are extant regarding that eventful day. The first, evidently penned in the morning before the Queen's condition had caused alarm, was sent by Lady Masham to Dean Swift. In this she says, "I was resolved to stay till I could tell you that our Queen has got so far the better of the Dragon, as to take her power out of his hands. He has been the most

ungrateful man to her, and to all his best friends that ever was born. I cannot have much time now to write all my mind, for my dear mistress is not well, and I think I may lay her illness to the charge of the lord treasurer, who for three weeks together was vexing and teasing her without intermission ; she could not get rid of him till Tuesday last." She then trusts that the Dean, who has given such wise advice will not go into Ireland, and she continues, "No, it is impossible; your charity and compassion for this poor lady who has been barbarously used, will not let you do it. I know you take great delight to help the distressed, and there cannot be a greater object than this good lady who deserves pity. . . . I could say a great deal upon this subject, but I must go to her, for she is not well. This comes to you by a safe hand, so that neither of us need be in any pain about it."

The second letter is from Peter Wentworth, who went to Kensington Palace at six in the afternoon and there heard the unwelcome news of the Queen's illness. Dr. Arbuthnot came out and gave the company some details, adding that she felt pain in her feet, "their being Garlick laid to't wch likewise was well, and was then gone to sleep. Tis now nine a clock and I am come home to write you this, but they tell me there's no judging how the decease will turn till twelve a clock. I overheard Dr. A. in a whisper say 'twas ten thousand to one if she recover'd, wch was dismall to me. The chaplains desir'd the Queen's servants that were in waiting to come and

pray for the Queen, so I and three or four more was the whole congregation, the rest of the company, and there was a great deal of all sorts of Whigs and Tories, staid in curiosity to hear what they could pick up."

That evening Her Majesty was in a burning fever, her mind wandered, and all through the night she murmured incoherent words about her brother. Four doctors were summoned, a consultation held, and a decision arrived at that she should be cupped; an operation that seemed to give her relief. Towards the following morning she had a relapse, when the royal apothecary was summoned to draw ten ounces of blood from her arm. Whilst this was being done a heavy fall was heard through the silent bedchamber, when Her Majesty starting asked what it was, and heard with concern it was Lady Masham, "who had swooned from grief and exhaustion."

Shortly before midday on the 30th, the Queen was seized with pain when it was thought she was dying; Dr. Mead emphatically declared she could not live an hour; but on the lancet being once more applied, she regained consciousness. That day the ministers assembled at the Cockpit, where news of the Queen's condition was sent by the Duchess of Ormond to her husband, both of whom were avowed Jacobites. The council was now crowded by Whig lords, secretly summoned by Lord Oxford to support the House of Hanover. In the course of their deliberations it was agreed that the Duke of Shrews-

bury, who had recently become a Whig, should be recommended to the Queen as Lord Treasurer. Though this was a blow to Bolingbroke who had hoped to hold that office himself, he undertook to acquaint Her Majesty with their decision, to which the dying woman consented. But the duke would only accept the post on the condition of the Queen placing its staff in his hands.

A deputation then waited at the bedside of one who was to have no peace even in death, and she was asked if she knew to whom she gave the white wand of treasurer ; to which she faintly answered "Yes, to the Duke of Shrewsbury." The Lord Chancellor then directing her hand, she gave the staff to his grace, bidding him "For God's sake use it for the good of my people."

News of the Queen's approaching death spreading abroad, great consternation was felt by all, not knowing what to expect. Prayers were offered for Her Majesty at St. Paul's ; the lord mayor was advised to take special care of the City ; the trained bands were called out ; a triple guard stationed at the Tower ; an embargo laid on all the ports ; ten battalions of troops were recalled from Flanders ; the Elector of Hanover was invited to hasten to England ; and a fleet sent to sea, lest James Stuart might come to claim the throne. In the royal palace his adherents were beside themselves with grief and dismay ; the Queen's death at this time not having been anticipated by them ; for says Peter Rae, in his "History of the Rebellion," "One



of the Queen's physicians, the most intimate with her, had pretended by some other art (than physic) whether of calculation, magic, or other infernal speculations, to tell the great men of the royal household that the Queen would live six years and a half. This was certainly a reason why they were the more secure, and had not their design complete, and all orders and warrants in readiness for the execution thereof."

Conclaves were secretly held in Lady Masham's rooms, tears were shed, and hands were wrung; for though Dr. Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, wished to go out and have James Stuart proclaimed at Charing Cross, when it was believed that if such a step were taken, the Duke of Ormond who commanded the Army would seize the Tower, and strike a blow for the Jacobite cause, yet all others saw the dire hopelessness of such an action which would imperil themselves without serving him whom they desired for king. And whilst helpless, woeful, and impatient, they gazed at each other in mute despair, they could hear the measured tramp of the Life Guards, called out to surround the palace, and the movements of the heralds at arms, who waited until the last breath was out of the Queen, to proclaim the Elector of Hanover as her successor.

Anxious eyes watched life ebb slowly in Her Majesty as she lay in a heavy slumber, broken by occasional moans and the laboured repetition of the same phrase "Oh my brother—oh my poor brother." Though

it was feared nothing could now restore her, Lady Masham privately sent for Dr. Radcliffe in whose skill all men had faith. At this time the great physician was living at Carshalton, suffering severely from gout ; so he sent word that he was ill and could not come. Later on he wrote to say, "However, ill as I was, I would have went to the Queen in a horse litter, had either Her Majesty, or those in commission next to her, commanded me so to do ;" adding, "But the people about her—the plagues of Egypt fall on them—put it out of the power of physic to be any benefit to her." But the populace who did not know the cause of his refusal to attend their Sovereign, were so incensed, that threatening letters were sent, warning him that "he should be pulled to pieces if he ventured abroad."

On Saturday morning, July 31st, 1714, the Queen's doctors ordered her head to be shaven, but whilst this was being done she fell into convulsions that lasted a couple of hours. Later she rallied and was able to take some nourishment. Amongst those who crowded round the dying Sovereign, was the Bishop of London, Dr. Robinson, successor to her tutor Henry Compton, who some months previously had injured his head by falling down stairs, an accident which Swift said left him "as sensible as ever," but was the means of sending him out of life. Calling for Dr. Robinson, the Queen held a private conference with him, the object of which may be gathered from his answer overheard by the Duchess of Ormond.

"Madam," he said to Her Majesty, "I will obey your commands; I will declare your mind, but it will cost me my head." She told him she would receive the Sacrament next day, but a couple of hours later she became delirious once more, again called piteously on her brother, whom her wishes or commands were now powerless to help, and died between seven and eight o'clock on the following morning, Sunday August 1st, 1714, in the fiftieth year of her age.

"Never was sleep more welcome to a weary traveller than death to the Queen," wrote Dr. Arbuthnot, who had been a constant witness to the disturbances into which she was thrown by the conduct of her ministers. Both he and another of her devoted servants, Lady Masham, suffered a severe loss because Her Majesty had left her will unsigned. She had, however, whilst conscious, given a sealed bundle of papers—probably letters from her brother and step-mother—to the Duchess of Somerset, with directions to have them burnt. This was handed by her grace to the Lords Justices, or Regents in charge of the Government pending the arrival of the King, telling them of the Queen's desire, when they, not without some debate, decided to destroy them unread.

On Sunday morning the Elector of Hanover was declared King of Great Britain and Ireland, under the title of George I.; this peaceable proclamation being witnessed by an enormous concourse of people, a vast number of the nobility and gentry being present

in their coaches, all of whom seemed mightily satisfied. At night there was great rejoicing and fine illuminations ; my Lord Bolingbroke having a vast bonfire outside his house in Golden Square. " But that may be out of Policy fearing the mob," says Peter Wentworth, " but there was no occasion for this precaution, for King George was proclaim'd very Peacably and everything has continued ever since."

Notwithstanding the general rejoicing at the succession of George I., Queen Anne was greatly beloved by the people for her generosity, her mercy, her great charity, and womanly kindness. For three weeks the remains of this " crowned slave," as one historian calls her, lay in state, and were then taken with great pomp and laid beside her husband and near her sister in Henry VII.'s Chapel in Westminster Abbey, the ceremony taking place on August 24th, 1714.

## CHAPTER IX

The Duke of Marlborough returns to London—Peter Wentworth's Comments on His Entry—His Grace's First Disappointment—Illness of Lady Sunderland—Death of Lady Bridgewater—Introduction to England of Inoculation—Hostility to the practice by Doctors and Parsons—George I. lands at Greenwich—Description by an Eye Witness of His Entry into London—Appointments at Court and in the Government—The Duchess and Walpole—Lord Oxford is sent to the Tower—The Rising in Scotland—Death of Lady Sunderland—Her Letter to Her Husband—The Duke of Marlborough has a Paralytic Stroke—Recovers and goes to Bath—Letter from Her Grace—Concerning the building of Blenheim Palace—The Duke is again attacked by Paralysis—The Duchess takes Him to Marlborough House—Some Account of that Residence—Her Grace employs Sir John Vanbrugh to arrange a Marriage for Her Granddaughter with the Duke of Newcastle—Correspondence between Them and Subsequent Quarrel—Why Lord Oxford was never brought to Trial—Hatred of the Duchess to the Government—She is accused of aiding James Stuart—Her Interview with George I.—His Majesty's Reply to Her Letter.



## CHAPTER IX

THE Duke of Marlborough had decided to return to England previous to the death of Queen Anne ; for by one of those unforeseen turns in the wheel of political events, he had recently received friendly overtures, which he gladly accepted, from Robert Harley, Lord Oxford, that guaranteed his safety from exposure or prosecution ; Harley's motive for this reconciliation lying in his desire to keep well with one who had gained favour with the Elector of Hanover, and who could recommend his services and promote his interests, in case his Electoral Highness became King of England.

Evidence of their friendship is given in a letter written by Harley to the duke towards the end of 1713, telling him that a royal warrant for ten thousand pounds has been granted towards defraying the costs of building of Blenheim Palace ; and also in a note dated July 14th, 1714, from Viscount Bolingbroke to Lord Strafford, in which the former says " Lord Marlborough's people give out that he is coming over, and I take it for granted he is so ; whether on account of

the ill figure he makes on the Continent, or the good one he hopes to make at home, I shall not determine. But I have reason to think that some people (Lord Oxford) who would rather move heaven and earth than part with their power, or make a right use of it, have lately made overtures to him, and have entered into some degree of concert with his creatures."

On the Sunday morning on which the Queen died, the Duke of Marlborough landed at Dover, when he and his wife heard that she who had raised them to be the highest subjects in her kingdom, and who had placed a regal power in their hands, was no more. Neither of them betrayed grief or respect ; for three days later, whilst their benefactress was still unburied, they made a triumphal entry into London, preceded by a company of the City Grenadiers, surrounded by their family and friends, and followed by two hundred Whigs on horseback. The duke's carriage broke down at Temple Bar, but he and the duchess getting into a coach were driven to Marlborough House, where the Grenadiers fired a volley by way of a parting salute.

All that evening he was visited by a vast number who declared themselves staunch Whigs and sturdy supporters of the House of Hanover ; for news of his friendly relations with the new King had spread abroad, and his and their triumph over the Tories and Jacobites was joyfully celebrated.

But our old friend Peter Wentworth was not amongst these courtiers, for writing on August 6th,



to his brother, he says, "the Duke of Marlborough was never so much out of favour with me as he's now at present, for the insulting manner he enter'd the town, he that used to come so privately when in favour and with Victory, to suffer himself to be met with a train of coaches and a troop of Militia with drums and trumps. He's asham'd of it and says he beg the City to excuse their compliment but they wou'd not. Today," continues Peter, "Sir John Packington mov'd the House that Dr. Ratcliff shou'd be expell'd the house for not coming to the Queen when sent for, but he was not seconded and so it dropt. He's a dog and I don't love him for what he did to the Duke of Gloucester ; but however he has this to say for himself, that he knew the Queen did not send for him, and had expressed her aversion to him in her last illness."

The Duke of Marlborough was fully prepared to resume his former power in the ministry and at Court ; but his first disappointment came when he learned he was not included amongst the lords justices or regents, who were entrusted with the government of the kingdom whilst awaiting the King's arrival. While he was still smarting from this slight, the duchess, whose long experience of courts had shown her the disappointments, vexations, and deceptions that attend ambition, begged of him on her knees, as she says, that he would never again accept employment. "I said everybody that liked the Revolution and the security of the law had a great esteem for him"; she

writes, "that he had a greater fortune than he wanted ; and that a man who had had such success, with such an estate, would be of more use to any Court than they could be of to him ; that I would live civilly with them, if they were so to me, but would never put it into the power of any king to use me ill. He was entirely of this opinion, and determined to quit all, and serve them only when he could act honestly, and do his country service at the same time."

Having taken the oaths of allegiance and supremacy to the new king, whose rival he had so frequently sworn to support, the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough went down to Holywell House at St. Albans, for which they had often longed whilst abroad. After a short stay there they set out for Bath, where their daughter Lady Sunderland, who for some time had been in failing health, was drinking the waters. Their meeting must have been deeply painful, for it was evident to them that an internal ailment from which she suffered must soon end her life. On the 22nd of the previous March, 1714, whilst they were still abroad, their daughter Betty, Lady Bridgewater, had died of small-pox.

At this time the continual outbursts of this foul disease, for which English science knew no remedy, used to sweep thousands annually into their graves, and sadly disfigure those who recovered from its attacks. It was only some three years later that Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, whilst travelling in Turkey with her husband, who was ambassador to the



ELIZABETH CHURCHILL, COUNTESS OF BRIDGEWATER.



Ottoman Court, first heard of a preventative for this malady from which she had suffered and of which her brother had died. Writing from Adrianople on April 1st, 1717, she says, "The small-pox, so fatal and so general amongst us, is here entirely harmless by the invention of ingrafting, which is the term they give it."

Then follows a graphic and unpleasant description of the methods of inoculation, and she ends by saying, "I am patriot enough to take pains to bring this useful invention into fashion in England ; and I should not fail to write to some of our doctors very particularly about it, if I knew any one of them that I thought had virtue enough to destroy such a considerable branch of their revenue for the good of mankind. But that distemper is too beneficial to them not to expose to all their resentment the hardy wight that should undertake to put an end to it. Perhaps if I live to return, I may, however, have the courage to war with them."

Accordingly soon after her arrival in England in 1718, she began to teach and practise inoculation. As she foresaw, all her courage was needed to endure the results of this attempt to benefit humanity ; for the clamours raised against her were beyond belief. The indignation and bitterness with which the medical faculty denounced inoculation, was only equalled by their malicious attacks on mesmerism years later. The clergy were scarcely less hostile, and from every pulpit was heard solemn warnings against interference with the will of God in the chastisements He deigned to

inflict on His creatures. The mob, no less ignorant, were taught to hoot her as she passed through the streets, and abuse her as an unnatural mother who had risked the lives of her own children by this practice, borrowed from an infidel and barbarous people. So that for some four or five years, we are told, Lady Mary seldom spent a day without repenting of her patriotic undertaking, "and she vowed she never would have attempted it, if she had foreseen the vexation, the persecution, and even the obloquy it brought upon her."

The duke remained at Bath until news reached him that His Majesty "was hastening over to employ his utmost care for putting these kingdoms into a happy and flourishing condition," on which his grace set out for London to meet and greet the King. In reality the new Sovereign—who had neither schemed nor shown anxiety for his succession, and would never have left his beloved Hanover if the Jacobites had risen—had not betrayed any indecent haste to visit the country he was to rule over, and of whose government, people, or language he knew nothing. For over a month and a half had passed since the death of Queen Anne, before he and his son, afterwards George II., landed at Greenwich, where he was welcomed by a great crowd of ministers, courtiers, bishops, and the people at large, who were all eagerness to see him.

Amongst them was the late Sovereign's equerry, Peter Wentworth, who says, "I have the satisfaction to tell you that we have got our King and Prince

safe and well at St. James ; I gave him my hand to help him out of the Barge, the Duke of Shrewsbury presented me to kiss the King's hand, and my Lord Bathurst mounted me up a pretty Spanish horse to ride by the King's coach side, so that my Person is well known to his majesty."

The King and his son were conveyed to St. James's Palace amidst the roar of cannon, the ringing of bells, the blare of bands, and the cheers of the mob ; but, says a quaint letter from a correspondent named Hill, which is preserved amongst the Lechmere Parkinson manuscripts, "the procession was not in anything finner than what we have before had, tho the gentlemen were well dressd, but for want of ladys there was a great lose in the shew, as will be at the coronation, which certainly cant be near so fine as twas at the poor Queens. When the Princess will come in is uncertain, tho she was expected at the Hague yesterday, but the wind is now against her coming over. The Prince promises the ladys a very gay Court. They say hes much inclined to that sort of life, plays a pritty deal but very low. The King has supd with several of the noblemen. He hates much grandeur, he goes in a Hackny chair and pays em himself. He thinks our Court has to much state. His two favourite turks and Mademosel Killmansect I guese you have heard of, tho perhapes not of the mistake that one of them led his Majesty into some nights agoe, when about nine or ten at night he was going to this Mademosels, who has a house in St. James St. next

door to Lady Renelows, where this confident knocked. The chair was carried in and opened, but the King soon saw his mistake, set himself down and ordered to the next house. Whether it proved a jest to him I dont hear, but a very good one it has bin to the town and the Lady withall is very ugly."

For many days after His Majesty's arrival at St. James's Palace nothing was seen but bustle and apparent rejoicing; courtiers in their best apparel, and finest wigs, with blandest smiles, pressing forward through the royal apartments, all of them eager to bend their knees, kiss His Majesty's hand, and gain his smiles. For now hopes and fears rose and fell, and envy, malice, jealousy, and ambition burned in men's brains, when Ministers were to be made, the great offices of the Court filled, loyal adherents rewarded, and all supporters of the Stuarts punished.

Accordingly the Duke of Shrewsbury was made Lord Chamberlain; the Duke of Somerset, Master of the Horse; the Duke of Devonshire, Lord High Steward; Lord Wharton was given the Privy Seal; Lord Townshend was entrusted with the formation of the Government, and Sir Robert Walpole was made Paymaster of the Forces. The Duke of Marlborough, notwithstanding his wife's advice, accepted the post of Captain-General and Master of the Ordnance; his son-in-law Lord Godolphin had his former post of Cofferer to the Court restored to him; Lord Bridgewater was made Chamberlain to the Prince; the Duke of Montagu was given a company in the first regiment



of Guards ; but the duke's remaining son-in-law, who had not been included amongst the regents, "having been too violent and too odious to a great part of the nation," was made Lord-Lieutenant in Ireland, which was considered a kind of honourable banishment from affairs of state. In those days it was not considered necessary that the Viceroy should reside in the sister isle, and the fact remains that Lord Sunderland never crossed the Channel. In October, 1715, he exchanged his Lord-Lieutenancy for the office of Lord of the Privy Seal, and joined Lord Townshend in his opposition to the Prince of Wales, who used to speak of my Lord Sunderland as "that scoundrel and puppy and knave."

We have it on the authority of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu that the Duke of Marlborough, "who was making almost the same figure at Court that he did when he first came into it—I mean bowing and smiling in the ante-chamber, while Townshend was in the closet—was not however pleased with Walpole, who began to behave to him with the insolence of new favour; and his duchess, who never restrained her tongue in her life, used to make public jokes of the beggary she first knew him in, when her caprice gave him a considerable place, against the opinion of Lord Godolphin and the Duke of Marlborough."

Whilst those who were fortunate enough to make their loyalty to the House of Hanover apparent, were reaping high rewards, those who were known to have intrigued with James Stuart suffered; for the Duke

of Ormond was forbidden to enter the royal presence, and he and Viscount Bolingbroke quitted the country in time to escape the fate of Lord Oxford, who was sent to the Tower on a charge of high treason. The two former entered the service of the Court of St. Germans, and were outlawed and attainted. They then opened up a correspondence with the Jacobites in England, and as in the last reign, secret negotiations were carried on to place the King over the water, on the throne. These endeavours resulted in the rising in Scotland, where James Stuart landed in December 1715, was proclaimed King, and made preparations for his coronation at Scone, where his royal Scottish ancestors had been crowned.

His hopes of sovereignty were brief, for the rising was quickly suppressed by the army acting under the directions of the Duke of Marlborough as Commander-in-Chief; and James Stuart, hurrying on board a French vessel, left his faithful Scottish adherents to disperse and hide themselves in the Highlands. The complete defeat of the Prince he had so often promised to support, was chiefly due to the Duke of Marlborough, whose instructions General Cadogan had carried out.

Peace was scarcely restored when a blow fell on the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, which was not the less keen because expected; for on April 15th, 1716, their daughter Anne, Countess of Sunderland, died. Her loss was the greater because she was the only one of their children who could check her mother's violent

temper and soften her harsh ways. The tact, forbearance, and gentleness by which this was done, had often been exercised to prevent the duchess and her son-in-law from coming to an open rupture ; for he was not merely aggressive and intolerant, irritable and dictatorial, but he lived with an extravagance beyond his means, and spent money at the gambling table which should have gone to make provision for his children ; faults which the duchess was not likely to overlook in silence.

Though, according to Lord Dartmouth, the Earl of Sunderland was "universally odious," his patient and gentle wife loved him, as may be judged from the letter she wrote to him some six months previous to her death, which was not to be opened until that event had happened. In this she says, "I have always found it so tender a subject (to you my dear) to talk of my dying, that I have chose rather to leave my mind in writing, which, though very insignificant, is some ease to me. Your dear self and the dear children are my only concern in this world ; I hope in God you will find comfort for the loss of a wife I am sure you loved too well not to want a great deal."

She continues by begging he will be careful not to live beyond his means, a matter she could not with all her care, quite prevent ; and she warns him against his love of play.

"As to the children," she adds, "pray get my mother to take care of the girls, and if I leave any boys too little to go to school ; for to be left to servants

is very bad for children, and a man can't take the care of little children that a woman can. For the love that she has for me, and the duty that I have ever showed her, I hope she will do it, and be ever kind to you, who was dearer to me than my life. Pray take care to see the children married with a prospect of happiness, for in that you will show your kindness to me ; and never let them want education or money while they are young." Special instructions are given regarding her eldest son Lord Spencer. "I beg of you," she writes, "to spare no expense to improve him, and to let him have an allowance for his pocket, to make him easy. You have had five thousand pounds of the money that you know was mine, which my mother gave me yearly ; whenever you can, let him have the income of that for his allowance, if he has none any other way. And don't be as careless of the dear children as when you relied upon me to take care of them, but let them be your care tho' you should marry again ; for your wife may wrong them, when you don't mind it."

This letter was sent by Lord Sunderland to the Duchess of Marlborough, who cried bitterly on reading it, and who readily promised to carry out its requests ; at the same time asking that she might have "some little trifle that my dear child used to wear in her pocket or anywhere else." In thanking the duchess for her intentions, her son-in-law said, "I thought as soon as I found that precious dear letter, I ought in justice to send it to you, that you might see the desires of



ANNE CHURCHILL, COUNTESS OF SUNDERLAND.



that dear dear angel, and at the same time have the comfort and satisfaction of seeing that, out of your own tenderness and goodness, you have resolved to do all she desired in it, even before you had seen it. The tenderness expressed in that dear letter towards me, is a fresh instance of the greatness of my loss and misfortune. This is too moving to say more of it. I am the unhappiest man living, I feel it and shall ever feel it."

Lady Cowper, wife of the lord chancellor, and Lady of the Bedchamber to the Princess of Wales, mentions in her interesting diary which gives many delightful views of the Court and courtiers at this time, that she was so grieved by Lady Sunderland's death, that she could do nothing but cry wherever she went. "Everybody concerned for Lady Sunderland," she continues. "The Duchess of Marlborough mightily afflicted, but her Griefs soon wear off. The duchess lived as ill in Reality, though not in Appearance, with Lady Sunderland as with any of her Children. They all hated her, and though outwardly Lady Sunderland carried it fair, yet it was in such a Manner that the Duchess perceived it was for Interest only, and despised her for it."

In the early part of this year the Duke of Marlborough, who had suffered from distressing headaches all his life, was now so unwell that his wife writes she was unwilling to trust him by himself in the frequent journeys which he made from his country house to London. The death of his favourite daughter

in April, terribly depressed him and whilst mourning her loss, he was seized with a paralytic stroke which for a time deprived him of speech and sense. This took place on May 28th, when he was at St. Albans, to which place Dr. Garth was quickly summoned.

Efforts to restore him were successful and he soon recovered. The duchess was a devoted if not a gentle nurse, who domineered over her patient and his doctor. It was on this occasion that Garth, of whom it was said "no physician knew his art more, nor his trade less," begged that the duke would take some medicine which he disliked. "Do," urged the duchess, "for I'll be hanged if it do not prove serviceable." "Then do take it my lord duke," said Garth quickly, "for it must be of service one way or the other."

Early in the month of July, the duke was well enough to be removed to Bath, where he was recommended to drink the waters. After having spent seven days on the road, he reached the city on the 14th of the month and was warmly received by the mayor and aldermen, with ringing of bells, the congratulations of the people of quality and fashion, and the cheers of the public ; much to his gratification and that of the duchess. Here his tall but now slightly stooped figure, wrapped in a cloak, might be seen walking up and down the parade, enjoying the morning sunshine, his wife beside him. Towards midday he drank the waters in the pump room in company of a number of distinguished invalids suffering from gout, asthma, or excess ; whilst in the evening



he joined the card parties of his friends and enjoyed a game whose stakes were not extravagant.

His usual stake was sixpence a game, as we learn from one of Spence's anecdotes, which relates that one day when the great duke had played piquet with Dean Jones for a good while, his grace rose from the table when winner of one game. Some time after he desired the dean to pay him his sixpence, but the parson said he had no silver. Not satisfied with this, the duke asked for his money over and over, and suggested that the dean might change a guinea and give him sixpence which he wanted to pay for the chair that carried him home. "The dean," continues the story "after so much pressing did at last get change, paid the duke his sixpence, observed him a little after leave the room, and declares that after all the bustle that had been made for his sixpence, the duke actually walked home, to save the little expense a chair would have put him to."

On this visit to Bath the duke and duchess took with them their eldest granddaughter, Lady Harriet Godolphin, whom as the duchess plainly says, she was anxious to dispose of. Accordingly, whilst the duke amused himself with basset or his favourite game of whist, the duchess and her granddaughter were carried in their chairs to the Assembly Rooms, where beaux in laced frills, satin breeches, and velvet coats, and belles in towering head dresses, low cut gowns, and hooped skirts, danced minuets to the dulcet sounds of fiddles and flutes, and flirted outrageously ; their

elders meanwhile sitting against the walls whispering scandal behind fans, or taking prodigious pinches of snuff as preliminaries of telling some wicked story.

The Duke and Duchess of Marlborough being greatly dissatisfied with the ministry in which he had no place, a scheme was entered into between him and other malcontents to oust it from power ; when he once more began to intrigue with his old friends the Tories, holding conferences and meetings with them at Lord Carnarvon's house. His sudden illness had interrupted his designs, but when he began to recover, Lady Cowper tells us, the schemers flocked to Bath, "for though the duke could not advise he could lend his name and purse, both which the duchess governed (a pleasure to her, who loved power even more than the duke). Lord Sunderland came for his instructions twice or thrice before he went away" (to Hanover where George I. was then staying), "and nothing was talked of at Bath but the great things that were to be done when the King came over. The Court meanwhile was lulled asleep by the report of the Duke of Marlborough's illness. People did not so much as remember the taste the duchess had for government, and that having the duke's purse at command, she could do that which the duke's love of money would never permit him to do ; and 'tis no wonder Sunderland was so devoted to her, since he was so well paid for it ; for since this illness she got the duke to alter his will and take everything

from my Lady Godolphin he could hinder her of, and leave the bulk of his estate to Sunderland and his children."

Writing on September 3rd, 1716, to the lady of the bedchamber who gives the above details, the Duchess of Marlborough says her husband is better, though "he wants a good deal yet of being well." However, she has great hope of his recovery, as she hears every day of people who were worse but who regained their health by drinking the waters. Lady Grandison was one instance. "She told me the other day that she understood or spoke but very little for a great while, and one of her hands was dead and withered, which is now filled out like the other, and nobody would think she ever had the palsy."

The duchess continues by expressing her concern for the account she hears of Lady Cowper's health, "which I have always feared would not be mended by being at Court. I don't wonder that you find it melancholy to be away from your lord and children ; for though the Princess is very easy and obliging, I think any one that has common sense or honesty must needs be very weary of everything one meets with in Courts. I have seen a good many and lived in them many years, but I protest I was never pleased but when I was a child, and after I had been a maid of honour for some time, at fourteen, I wished myself out of the Court, as much as I had desired to come into it before I knew what it was."

This letter ends by saying "Her grace of Shrewsbury is here, and of a much happier temper. She plays at ombre upon the Walks, that she may be sure to have company enough, and is as well pleased in a great crowd of strangers as the common people are with a bull-baiting or a Mountebank." The duchess complains of the dirt and odours of Bath, which are worse than any that came under her experiences abroad; whilst the noise keeps her almost always awake. But "I can bear it with patience and all other misfortunes," says she, "as long as I think the waters do the Duke of Marlborough any good."

The duke was so much benefited by his stay that he was able to leave Bath by the middle of October, when he went to Blenheim, that he might gratify himself with a sight of the palace which had been raised to his honour, but which was yet uninhabitable. The impression it gave to the duchess was, that it would require a great many thousand pounds to finish a house which was as yet a mere shell; "besides all without doors, where there is nothing done, and is a chaos that turns one's brains but to think of it; and it will cost an immense sum to complete the causeway, and that ridiculous bridge, in which I counted thirty-three rooms. Four houses are to be at each corner of the bridge; but that which makes it so much prettier than London bridge is, that you may set in six rooms and look out at window into the high arch, while the coaches are driving over your head."

The building of Blenheim Palace had been suspended

since 1712, when the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough had fallen under the displeasure of the late Sovereign ; and the ten thousand pounds which, as already mentioned, Harley in his desire to conciliate his grace had obtained from the treasury, had been given in part payment of the sums due to the workmen and contractors. On the duke's return he hoped the new King would order the palace to be finished at the public expense ; but whilst unwilling to do this, the Government agreed to pay all arrears for labour and materials incurred whilst the building was carried on at the cost of Her late Majesty ; when nothing was left for the duke but to finish it at his own expense, which was accordingly done. Altogether the public money expended on the palace amounted to £240,000 ; whilst its completion cost the duke and duchess some £60,000 more ; making in all £300,000.

On the Government coming to the decision mentioned, the duke received an estimate for finishing the building from its architect, Sir John Vanbrugh, whom he summoned to meet him at Blenheim, and gave him directions to set his people to work at the palace ; whilst the duchess "was pleased to express herself in the most favourable and obliging manner" concerning him, as he relates.

The duke and duchess then went to Holywell House at St. Albans, where on November 10th he was seized with a second attack of paralysis, of so severe a nature that the three doctors who attended him, thought his end was near, when all his family were summoned to

bid him farewell. However his grace rallied once more, and though from this time his speech was affected, and his health quite broken, he lived for some years. Instead of keeping the stricken man from the pitying sight of the people, and allowing him to remain in the country home he loved, surrounded by the grandchildren who were now his chief interest and delight, the duchess took him with her to London ; for she still desired to mix with the world, be in touch with the Court, triumph over her enemies, hector her friends, and advance her schemes ; and there can be little doubt that she felt heartily glad the King had not agreed to buy Marlborough House, which on His Majesty's first coming over, the duke, according to Peter Wentworth, had pressed him to purchase for the Prince of Wales ; telling him as an inducement, how easily it could be joined to St. James's Palace.

Though Marlborough House, at this time shut in on either side by a grove of chestnut trees, its west front open to the gardens of the palace, its south to the park then private, would have been a suitable residence for the heir to the Crown, the King felt no inclination to buy it. In the same year 1714, we learn from the *Weekly Post*, that the duke had lent it to the Prince and Princess of Wales, probably whilst they were looking out for a dwelling. "It is said," continues this statement, "that a terrace will be erected to join the same (Marlborough House) to St. James's Palace."

It was not until more than a hundred years later, in

1817, that Marlborough House reverted to the Crown. It was then given to the Princess Charlotte, daughter of George IV., as a residence, and after her premature death in November of that year, was occupied for some years by her husband Prince Leopold of Coburg. On the death of William IV. in 1837, it was settled by Act of Parliament on the Dowager Queen Adelaide. After her demise it was lent to the Government School of Design, the founder and forerunner of the South Kensington Museum and Art Schools ; whilst later on the Turner pictures and the Vernon collection were exhibited within its walls. Ultimately in 1861 it was thoroughly renovated, when it became the town residence of King Edward VII., then Prince of Wales. Whilst this process was going on, coats of paint and layers of wall paper were removed from the walls of the great hall and principal staircases, when pictures painted by Laguerre, representing battle scenes in which the first Duke of Marlborough had been victorious, were found underneath, in an excellent state of preservation.

Amongst other designs with which the duchess busied herself at this time, was that of marrying Lady Harriet Godolphin, whose plainness was compensated for by her brightness and intelligence. Early in 1714, the duchess had set herself to dispose of this granddaughter, selecting for her husband, Pelham Holles, then Lord Clare, but soon afterwards Duke of Newcastle. Whether Lady Harriet liked or disliked him, was a mere detail which could not be

expected to influence her imperious grandmother's choice ; and it is doubtful if those whom she intended to marry, had ever seen each other at this time.

Knowing that Sir John Vanbrugh was a friend of the Duke of Newcastle, she commissioned the architect to open negotiations with, and incline his grace "to prefer my Lady Harriet Godolphin to all other women who were likely to be offered him"; whilst at the same time "she laid a very great and very just stress on the extraordinary qualifications and personal merits of my Lady Harriet," whom she thought in all respects a young woman most likely to make him happy.

Sir John Vanbrugh, who as playwright and a wit, a gossip and a beau, enjoyed the favour and companionship of the great, and was anxious to merit their favour, willingly engaged to carry out her grace's wishes ; when it was agreed that the affair should be managed in such a manner as not to give the Duke of Newcastle the uneasiness of sending any message to her grace, in case he did not like the proposal. Accordingly when opportunity offered, Sir John told the duchess, he "brought into discourse the characters of several women, that I might have a natural occasion to bring in hers, which I have then dwelt a little upon, and in the best manner I could, distinguished her from the others. This," continues the match maker, "I have taken three or four occasions to do, without the least appearance of having any view in it, thinking the rightest thing I could do would be to possess



him with a good impression of her, before I hinted at anything more. I can give your grace no further accounts of the effect of it, than that he seemed to allow of the merit I gave her."

The Duke of Newcastle, however, ventured to say, though in a very gentle manner, that he wished Lady Harriet's appearance equalled the descriptions of her understanding; on which Sir John gave it as his opinion, that although he believed she would never have a beautiful face, he could see plainly it would prove a very agreeable one, which he thought infinitely more satisfactory; adding further, "that her shape and figure in general would be perfectly well; and that I would pawn all my skill (which had used to be employed a good deal in these kind of observations) that in two years' time no woman in town would be better liked."

His grace agreed that what was said might very probably be right; and was inclined to think that Lady Harriet might make him a suitable wife, especially as the hopes of having children descended from the Duke of Marlborough had an extraordinary weight with him. As for her plainness he was willing to overlook that defect, his ideas regarding a helpmate being most unusual with those of his age and position. "He had made," writes Vanbrugh, "more observations on the bad education of the ladies of the Court and town than any one would have expected, and owned he shou'd think of marriage with much more pleasure than he did, if he cou'd find a woman (fit for him

to marry) that had such a turn of understanding, temper, and behaviour, as might make her a usefull friend, as well as an agreeable companion; but of such a one he seemed almost to despair."

The came Sir John's opportunity to insinuate that my Lady Harriet was happily the very sort of woman he so much desired, and thought it so difficult to find. The duke so far agreed with him, that civil things were said about the alliance, and the question of her fortune broached, his grace demanding a portion of forty thousand pounds. At this the Duchess of Marlborough flew into a rage, declaring that such a proposal was the most effectual way of ending the business, "since Lady Harriet is not a citizen nor a monster, and I never heard of such a fortune in any other case, unless now and then, when it happens that there is but one child."

This seemed to end the negotiations, and Lady Harriet was taken to Bath, where a considerable offer was made for her "and in a very valuable family" where the duchess could have had her own conditions; but this was refused. There happened, however, to be a certain Mr. Walters at Bath, where her grace met him for the first time. Learning that he was a friend of the Duke of Newcastle's, she thought it "not unnatural and not unreasonable" that she should own to him how much she wished an alliance between her granddaughter and his grace. The rest was deferred until they met in town. Meanwhile the Duke of Newcastle summoned Sir John

Vanbrugh to Claremont, that he might ask if he had anything further to say of Lady Harriet, what he had learned of her conduct and behaviour at Bath, what he had observed of her at Blenheim, and "if I knew anything that could reasonably abate of the extraordinary impression I had given him of her, I would have that regard to the greatest concern of his life not to hide it from him, for that if he married her, his happiness would be entirely determined by her answering or not answering the character he had received of her from me, and upon which he solely depended."

On hearing Sir John's answer his grace came once more "to an absolute resolution of treating," and asked what the duchess had said about the fortune. He was told that her grace had not mentioned a word of the match to Sir John whilst at Blenheim, which greatly surprised the duke, who then related what had passed between herself and Mr. Walters. Vanbrugh was naturally surprised and indignant that the duchess had treated him in so unfriendly a manner, after employing him for the past two years in striving to bring about a marriage, and at a time when his endeavours seemed likely to succeed. The duke, who did not know her so well, was equally astonished : but hoped Sir John would still endeavour to promote the match. Accordingly Vanbrugh wrote a very civil letter to the Duchess of Marlborough, stating his grace's desire, and telling her how surprised both were to find nothing had been said to him about the

marriage whilst at Blenheim. He ended by telling her, "I don't say this madam to court being further employed in this matter, for match-making is a damned trade, and I never was fond of meddling with other people's affairs. But as in this, on your own motion, and at your own desire, I had taken a good deal of very hearty pains to serve you, and I think with a view of good success, I cannot but wonder (though not be sorry) you should not think it right to continue your commands upon your obedient humble servant."

He then returned to town, where a certain Mr. Richards showed him a packet of papers in which her grace "had given herself the trouble," as he writes, to make a series of charges against him, covering thirty sheets of paper, and beginning from the time when he was first employed to build Blenheim. These charges ended by saying he had brought the Duke of Marlborough into the unhappy condition of either leaving the palace unfinished, or by continuing it, to distress his fortune and deprive his grandchildren of the provision he desired to make them.

This was too much for Vanbrugh to bear with patience, so he wrote the duchess a letter saying "These papers, madam, are so full of far-fetched laboured accusations, mistaken facts, wrong inferences, groundless jealousies, and strained constructions, that I should put a very great affront upon your understanding if I supposed it possible you could mean anything in earnest by them, but to put a stop to my troubling you

any more. You have your end madam, for I will never trouble you more, unless the Duke of Marlborough recovers so far to shelter me from such intolerable treatment."

The duchess had already written but not forwarded a reply to his previous letter dated November 6th, 1716, telling him it was unreasonable that he should object to her employment of Mr. Walters, and that he, Sir John, should have spoken of the marriage when they met at Blenheim. Without destroying this fairly civil answer, she added a postscript to it on getting his second letter, which said, "Upon the receiving that very insolent letter upon the eighth of the same month, 'tis easy to imagine that I wished to have had the civility I expressed in this letter back again, and was very sorry I had fouled my fingers in writing to such a fellow."

This quarrel between Sir John and the duchess did not prevent the marriage of Lady Harriet Godolphin and the Duke of Newcastle. The bride brought him a fortune of twenty-two thousand pounds, but she gave him no children.

All this time Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, was still in the Tower, where he had been sent, according to Swift, at the instigation of the Duchess of Marlborough, whose hatred for the late Minister and sometime abettor of Abigail, knew no measure. After a confinement of two years, on a charge of high treason and other crimes and misdemeanours, amongst which were "giving evil advice to the late Queen and

favouring the cause of the Pretender," he petitioned in May 1717, to have his case taken into consideration. His desire was granted, and on the 24th of the following month his trial was begun in Westminster Hall. But no sooner had Hampden opened the charges against him, than Lord Harcourt moved that they should adjourn to the House of Lords, which being done, a resolution was passed that the "Commons be not admitted to proceed in order to make good the articles against Robert, Earl of Oxford, for high crimes and misdemeanors, till judgment be first given on the articles for high treason."

The two Houses disagreed on the method of procedure, and various conferences were held, at which, though he did not take part in the debates, the Duke of Marlborough voted in favour of Harley's prosecution, and as his biographer, Archdeacon Coxe, says, "ranked with the most hostile opponents of the impeached minister." No doubt his grace considered he was quite safe in revenging himself on one to whom he largely attributed his downfall in the previous reign, and to whom he owed his banishment; for Harley's grandson, who became Archbishop of York, told the historian, Sir John Dalrymple, that soon after her return to England, the Duchess of Marlborough contrived to get hold of and destroy the letter that had sent her husband into exile, which was found amongst the papers of the imprisoned earl.

Eventually, on July 1st, the date appointed for the

continuance of the trial, no prosecutor appeared, when the impeachment was dismissed, and Lord Oxford acquitted of high treason and other crimes and misdemeanours.

The cause of this unexpected result is given with great minuteness in the *Biographia Britannica* on the authority of a contemporary, Mr. Serjeant Comyns, who afterwards became Chief Baron of the Exchequer. According to him, he and Lord Harley, eldest son of Lord Oxford, waited one day on the Duke of Marlborough, to beg that he would attend the trial on July 1st, of the impeached peer. Somewhat disturbed at this request that seemed made for an ominous purpose, his grace nervously asked what Lord Oxford wanted of him, when Serjeant Comyns replied it was merely to ask him a question or two. At this the duke's agitation increased, and he made more particular enquiries as to why his presence was desired; when Lord Harley told him he would be asked to certify to his own handwriting; adding that his father, Lord Oxford, had in his possession all the letters he had received from his grace since the Revolution; the inference being that these were treasonable to the House of Hanover.

The duke then became so agitated that he not only walked up and down the room, but pulled off his wig and flung it away. When the unwelcome visitors enquired what reply they would carry back to Lord Oxford, the duke quickly answered "Tell his lordship I shall certainly be there." The anecdote concludes by saying

that "this is the true reason why Lord Oxford was never brought to trial."

His case which was the sensation of the day, was soon forgotten in the universal excitement caused by the South Sea scheme, originally introduced by Harley, but revived by his enemy Lord Sunderland, who in 1718, had become First Lord of the Treasury. The scheme was floated for the purpose of paying off part of the national debt, by the formation of a company which would have a monopoly of the trade in the South Pacific. Lord Cowper later denounced this South Sea Bubble, as it came to be called, "as contrived for treachery, ushered in by fraud, received with pomp, but big with ruin and destruction." Whilst its magnificent promises dazzled and duped all classes, the Duchess of Marlborough, always shrewd and proverbially lucky in monetary affairs, sold out when stock was at its highest, and realised one hundred thousand pounds by this bubble which ruined thousands and fell as a calamity on the nation. But though benefiting by the scheme, she clamoured for the prosecution of its promoters and patrons, who were her political enemies.

From his close connection with this disastrous affair, his making one of a ministry she detested, and above all because of his third marriage with a woman she considered unsuitable to him in age and family, the duchess became bitterly hostile to her son-in-law Lord Sunderland, who in return detested her, and many and wrathful were the letters which passed between them.

Neither her own advancing years nor her husband's



declining health brought her any desire for peace or retirement; for her mind still busied itself with political affairs, and her tongue was as acid and active as of old, in decrying the government she detested. Amongst its members whom, next to her son-in-law, she delighted to abuse, were Lord Cadogan, whom later she accused of striving to appropriate part of a sum of money given him to invest; Mr. Secretary Craggs, who she believed had written her an anonymous letter full of scurrilous charges; and Lord Stanhope, who she thought was anxious to fill her husband's posts. Wherever she went, whoever she saw, it was her custom to abuse and traduce them, in return for which, they, as she considered, entered into a plot to ruin her in the eyes of His Majesty. For it soon became whispered abroad that the duchess, discontented and disappointed with the existing order of things, was implicated in a treasonable scheme to place James Stuart on the throne.

Nothing could more effectually injure her in the eyes of royalty, nothing could so thoroughly rouse her anger than such a report. She, however, kept it from her husband, and he first heard of it from Lord Sunderland, who sending for him, plainly accused the duchess of being in a plot to aid the King over the water, by furnishing him with a round sum. The poor duke, who never knew what extravagant step his injudicious consort might take, returned home in fear and excitement which she endeavoured to soothe. However the full gravity of the situation came home to her when a few days later she was told, that both she

and her husband had been denounced to the King as intriguers against his throne.

Her first step was to judge for herself the effect that this statement had on His Majesty, and accordingly she attended the next drawingroom. Since the arrival of the royal family, she and the duke had been received by them with distinction and friendliness ; and she had, as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu says, "a nearer view of them than perhaps it was prudent to give her ; for at their outset, wishing to conciliate the Marlborough party, they invited her to a degree of intimacy sure to end in proving the truth of that wise saying about familiarity, which we can all remember to have indited in round hand."

The duchess used to tell an amusing anecdote of what happened one day when she entered the royal nursery, where she found the Princess of Wales maintaining discipline, and one of the children roaring piteously in consequence. Her grace strove to console the smarting youngster, on which the Prince cried out, "Ay see there, you English are none of you well bred, because you was not whipt when you was young." "I thought to myself," the duchess used to say, "I am sure you could not have been whipt when you were young, but I choked it in."

On presenting herself at the royal drawing-room, she was received with marked coldness. Though the King could speak no English, and the duchess no language but her own, they had formerly exchanged bows and smiles, nods and friendly glances ; now, however, His

Majesty's countenance was stern when turned towards her, and she could find no kindness shining in his eyes. Willing, nay eager to set this down to accident, fickleness, or to the effects of fatigue, she again attended a drawing-room, but met with the same stern treatment from His Majesty. She then resolved to vindicate herself of the charge of treason, and wrote a letter to the King which she had translated into French for his benefit. She next sought a private interview with His Majesty through the favour of Madame Schulenberg, recently created Duchess of Kendal, one of his German mistresses.

This member of the seraglio, which as Horace Walpole says, so highly diverted the London mob and was food for gross lampoons, had been a lady-in-waiting on the Princess Sophia, when the future King became enamoured of her; and for twenty years previous to his coming to England, Madame Schulenberg remained his favourite. On his being called to the throne, she had refused to take "the terrible journey" to the country whose people, she had heard, were so accustomed to use their kings barbarously, that she feared they might chop off her lover's head in the first fortnight, and perhaps force her to the same horrible fate. Accordingly she, whom Lord Chesterfield said was very little above an idiot, remained at Hanover, until the Germans who had come over with the King, becoming jealous of the money greedily accumulated by Madame Kilmansegg, another of His Majesty's mistresses, begged that Schulenberg would

hasten over ; telling her of the fond reception all Germans met with in England, and of the immense fortune that awaited her. Such a temptation as this could not be resisted, and the journey was made. Though she had been content with a small pension in her own country, she soon began to amass money in this : her hands being ever open to bribery, and her judgment becoming skilled regarding the prices of places and offices. She had already accepted eleven thousand pounds from Viscount Bolingbroke, to obtain for him forgiveness from the King, and permission to return to England ; and there is little doubt the Duchess of Marlborough had paid for the favour granted by Madame Schulenberg, who was as Sir Robert Walpole said, "as much Queen of England as ever any was."

Accordingly one day in December 1720, the Duchess of Marlborough was introduced into the private apartments of the Duchess of Kendal to await the King. His Majesty's mistress, who was this time over sixty, and was tall and gaunt, with rounded shoulders and a yellow complexion, entertained her visitor until the door suddenly opened and the King entered—an elderly man with a pale face, and dull expression, wearing a dark tie wig, a coat, waistcoat, and breeches of snuff-coloured cloth, with the blue riband of the Garter on his breast. To him Her Grace of Marlborough made a profound courtesy, and then as she could not speak French, she merely handed him the letter written in that language, and bowing once more, quitted the room.

The letter began by saying that her personal application to him would have been avoided, if her husband's health had permitted him to lay her complaint before His Majesty. She thought that nothing in the world seemed so incredible as that, after all the trouble and danger she had been exposed to in her zeal for the King and his family, she could be supposed to enter into a correspondence with his greatest enemy, who must look upon her and the duke as objects of his highest resentment.

"Your majesty will readily believe," said she, "that it was with the greatest astonishment that I learned I had been represented to your majesty as being guilty of so black and foolish a crime. 'Tis with inexpressible concern that I have borne the thoughts of it for a few days; and therefore I am forced to beg that your majesty, out of compassion as well as justice, would be pleased to afford me an opportunity of vindicating myself from so groundless and cruel an accusation. This I am ready to do in such a manner as shall seem most proper to your majesty's great wisdom, till which time I cannot help accounting myself the most unhappy of all your majesty's faithful subjects."

The Duchess of Kendal had asked her to return and receive her answer to this letter, so different in its terms of respect and humility from those she had written to Queen Anne; but her grace refused on the plea that she could not speak French; but in reality, as must be plain to all, that she might receive an assurance from the King under his own hand, that he

held her innocent of conspiring against him. His letter came in good time, but was far from what she expected as it merely said: "Whatever I may have been told upon your account, I think I have shown on all occasions, the value I have for the services of the duke your husband; and I am always disposed to judge of him and you by the behaviour of each of you in regard to my service. Upon which I pray God, my Lady Marlborough to preserve you in all happiness."

Her grace immediately concluded that this unsatisfactory note had been written at the suggestion of the hated ministry, and her wrath flamed out anew. As she could not, as in a former reign, force her way into the Sovereign's presence and give vehement expression to her grievances; and as she even feared to plague the King with fresh complaints, she appealed to his mistress to right her in his eyes. Accordingly she wrote to the Duchess of Kendal, and after profuse apologies for troubling her grace, said, that though unwilling to importune His Majesty or unnecessarily interrupt "those thoughts which are much better employed" than in considering her affairs, yet she hoped that His Majesty's compassion and justice would give her some opportunity to vindicate herself; for she was impatient to appear innocent to him above all the world.

"Madam," she continued, "permit me to say I am injured beyond all expression, and this by an accusation as absurd and incredible as it is wicked. Neither the Duke of Marlborough nor myself can have any safety and security even of our lives as well as fortunes, but

in the safety of His Majesty and his family; and is it possible to be conceived, that either of us should be so weak as to contrive or assist in the bringing on our own destruction." After declaring that she defies the whole world to prove her guilty of conspiring, she adds, "I cannot suppose any man, of all that I know in the world, capable of so great an injustice as to be the author of so wicked an accusation except one, who perhaps may have malice enough to me, and native dishonour enough in himself, to be guilty of it; and when I say that the person I mean is Mr. Secretary Craggs, it is enough to add, that his behaviour towards me has been long ago of such a nature, that I have not permitted him these nine years so much as to speak to me."

In answer to this appeal she was referred to the note already sent her by the King, at which she was so indignant that she alienated herself from His Majesty's Court and joined that of the Prince and Princess of Wales, who were at this time on hostile terms with the Sovereign.





## CHAPTER X

The Duke of Marlborough's Declining Days—Interest in His Grandchildren—Their performance of *All for Love*—A Day with the Prince and Princess of Wales—The Duchess of Montagu's Description of the Parisians—His Grace of Marlborough makes His Last Will and Testament—Precautions to prove His Sanity—Lord Sackville's Description of Him—His Illness—The Duchess rushes after Dr. Mead—Death of the Great Duke—The Story of the Shorn Locks—Lying in State—Magnificent Funeral—Proposals of Marriage to His Widow—Lady Isabella Montagu weds the Duke of Manchester—Her Grace's Reply to Her Grandmother—The Duchess of Marlborough's Scheme to marry Lady Diana Spencer to Frederick Prince of Wales—Discovery by Walpole—Lady Diana marries Lord John Russell—Disputes between Henrietta Duchess of Marlborough and Her Mother—The Young Duchess patronises Musicians and Poets—Her Friendship with Congreve—The Playwright's Vanity—Voltaire visits Him—Goes to Bath with the Duchess—His Death and Will—Her Eccentric Conduct—The Dowager's Comment.



## CHAPTER X

**I**N his declining days, the Duke of Marlborough was able to enjoy the peace he had so often longed for during his campaigns abroad, or in the midst of the uncertainties and turbulence of party strifes at home. Though twice stricken by paralysis, he appeared well, "excepting," says the duchess "that he could not pronounce all words, which is common in that distemper, but his understanding was as good as ever. But he did not speak much to strangers, because when he was stopt by not being able to pronounce some words, it made him uneasy ; but to his friends he would talk freely."

His time was passed at his residences at Holywell House, St. Albans, at Windsor Lodge, and at Blenheim, where he delighted in walking about the grounds and watching the completion of the palace raised to his glory. But the greatest source of his enjoyment lay in his grandchildren, with whom he rode and drove, and in whose lessons in singing and dancing he took particular interest.

A daughter of his friend Sir Alexander Cairnes,

who frequently stayed with the Marlborough grandchildren and shared their amusements, describes some amateur theatricals in which she and they took part. The plays selected for performance were *Tamerlane*, and *All for Love, or The World Well Lost*. Dr. Hoadley, then Bishop of Bangor, but later of the more important see of Winchester, wrote a prologue for *All for Love*, in which amongst other fulsome things he assured the duke that beauty and virtue strove to move and recompense his early love, a beauty which Egypt's queen could never boast, and virtue she never knew, or quickly lost. The good bishop with that shameless flattery then in vogue, also told the duke that the Cæsars had to yield their bays to him, and in justice to own his superior merit.

*All for Love* was acted in the bow-window room at Holywell House, Miss Cairnes as Serapion the high priest, wearing a very fine surplice that came from Holland. "The old duke was so pleased," says she, "that we played it three times; first, because we were to play it; some time after, for Lord Winchelsea a great favourite there; and the third time at the duke's request. The duchess scratched out some of the most amorous speeches and there was no embrace whatever allowed. In short no offence to the company. I suppose we made a very grand appearance; there was profusion of brocade rolls, etc., of what was to be the window curtains at Blenheim. Jewels you may believe in plenty; and I think Mark Antony wore the sword that the emperor gave the Duke of Marlborough."



MARY CHURCHILL, DUCHESS OF MONTAGU.



Occasionally the duchess took him to visit friends or acquaintances, and in one of her letters she describes with much satisfaction a day they spent in the beginning of July 1720, with the Prince and Princess of Wales who were then living at Richmond, in a house "very handsome for anybody but the heir to the Crown." The duke and herself, she relates, met with a most agreeable reception, and the Princess, who, when she became Queen Caroline, was the object of her grace's special derision, was now she says "so very kind to the Duke of Marlborough and to poor me, and had so many agreeable ways of expressing it, that I really love her; and I am sure if others are treated as we were, they will never want a full Court of the best sort of people that this country affords. All the attendants from the lord chamberlain and ladies of the bedchamber, to the pages of the back stairs, were so civil, that I thought myself in a new world. There was very good music, though her royal highness I saw, thought I liked the noise of the box and dice, and contrived it so as to make me play on, when she left us in a very pretty manner."

At the date on which this was written, the duke had so far recovered, that his youngest daughter the Duchess of Montagu, for whom he had the greatest affection, thought it safe to leave him for some time, whilst she went abroad to see the sights of Paris, and drink the waters of Aix. In a quaint letter which she sent her husband, dated May 28th, 1720, which is still preserved amongst the Montagu manuscripts,

she gives her first impressions of the French capital where she was then staying. "I was in hopes I should have heard from you by this time," she begins "I want to know how you do ; I have been here but three or four days and I begin to be tired ; but I hope it will mend, for I have seen nothing yet but people that I think very disagreeable. The Duke of Berwick says he will carry us to see some of the fine places soon, and I wish he would begin. His duchess looks like a very ill-humoured woman, and I think not better bred than we are in England. I made myself as French as I could the moment I came, but they wear such loads of red and powder, that it is impossible for me to come up to that, so I believe I might as well have done nothing.

It is really true that if you would put a piece of scarlet cloth upon the whole side of your face, it would be exactly as they are. Then their hair is as short and as much curled as Cab's, powdered as white as snow, with a yellow coarse flourished gauze, ruffled round their head ; and in this manner they sit and talk all at a time, of the beauty of their dress ; indeed I believe they are the most ridiculous people in the world. I had writ thus far when your letter came in, which I give you a thousand thanks for, and upon my word it is the first pleasure I have had since I came here. I am sorry the inward man is so bad ; I wish to God, that, and the case to it, was with me, though I think I could not mend it, but the air might. There is no smoke here, which coming from



London I thought very odd, in so great a town ; but altogether I am not much pleased. . . . I think I have bought the prettiest nightgown for you that is possible. I hope you will like it, but I beg I may know exactly."

The duke, who was said to be richer than any prince in Europe, but who whilst at Bath would walk at night from the Assembly Rooms or the houses of his friends to his own lodgings that he might spare the hire of a chair, had made his will on several occasions.

After his wife's estrangement with Lord Sunderland he altered it once more, so that the final disposal of his wealth, said to have been over a million and a half, was made early in 1721. Always far-seeing and with little faith in humanity, the duchess thought it possible that her daughters, with whom she had quarrelled, or their children, might subsequently strive to upset this will on the plea of the duke's inability to make it. To prevent this she invited to dinner at Marlborough House those who were to witness his grace's signature to this document, that they might see for themselves, and give evidence later if necessary, that her husband was fully responsible for his acts.

As soon as dinner was over, and the solicitor's clerk had come to put the seals to the will, the duke rose from the table and brought it from an adjoining room, when, holding it up, he declared he had considered it carefully and was perfectly satisfied with it, and then signed every sheet. Lord Sunderland, whose name

was not mentioned in this deed, died on April 19th, 1722, when his son Robert succeeded him as fourth earl; and he dying in 1729, was succeeded by his brother Charles.

It was in this year 1721, that Lord Sackville, then a child of five, was carried to the gate of St. James's Palace to see the Duke of Marlborough pass as he left the Court. "He was then," he says, "in a state of caducity, but he still retained the vestiges of a most graceful figure, though he was obliged to be supported by a servant on either side, whilst the tears ran down his cheeks, just as he is drawn by Dr. Johnson. The populace cheered him as he passed through the crowd to enter his carriage. I have, however, heard my father say that the duke by no means fell into settled or irrecoverable dotage, as is commonly supposed, but manifested at times a sound understanding till within a very short period of his decease, occasionally attending the Privy Council, and sometimes speaking in his official capacity on matters of business with his former ability."

His last attendance at the House of Lords was some five months previous to his death, but it is more than doubtful if he spoke there. Having passed the early months of 1722 in town, the duke removed to Windsor Lodge in May, and early in the following month was attacked by a third paralytic stroke, this time more severe than the others. Dr. Mead, whom the duchess considered "the most obstinate and ignorant doctor that we have had for a great while,"

was sent for, as being the most skilful in his profession; but his remedies had no effect, which so enraged her grace that, caring nothing for the presence of the Bishop of Winchester, she swore at the doctor roundly, and when he escaped from the room rushed downstairs after him with the intention of pulling off his wig. Other physicians came and went, the family and friends were summoned, but all saw that the end was near. The duchess was with him when it came about four o'clock on the morning of Saturday, June 16th, 1722, he being then in his seventy-second year.

The only one in the world who loved her, the great general whose career she had spoiled at its height, the man whose patience she had sorely tried, and whose forbearance she had so little valued, was gone. Hard though she was, her sorrow must have been great. And it is probable repentance touched her when, on examining a cabinet where he kept all he most valued, she found a mass of her own hair. Then, whilst tears blinded her, she remembered the day long years before, when furious because he disobeyed her, she resolved to mortify him, and knowing that her beautiful and abundant hair was a source of pride and delight to him, she had impetuously cut it from her head. The shorn tresses had been left in a room through which he must pass, and in a place where he must see them. But he came and went, saw and spoke to her, showing neither anger, sorrow, nor surprise. When he next quitted the house she

ran to secure her tresses, but they had vanished, and on a consultation with her looking-glass she saw how foolish a thing she had done. But she said nothing about her shorn locks, nor did he, and she never knew what had become of them until they were found by her amongst those things he held most precious.

Some twelve days later than the duke's death the *General Advertiser* announced that the duchess "comes to town from Windsor next Monday, and the corpse of the duke will be brought soon after." The same authority states that "two Councils were held at Kensington Palace regarding the manner of his funeral, which will be performed with extraordinary state and magnificence ; and as some say from the Tower, others from Somerset House to Westminster Abbey" ; from which it seems probable that it was the intention of the Government to give and defray all expenses of a public funeral. If such an offer was made, it was declined by the duchess, who states that she bore all cost of the sumptuous display which attended her husband to the grave.

The duke's embalmed body was allowed to remain for some time at Windsor, before it was removed to Marlborough House, where it lay in state for some weeks, "the quality, persons of distinction, and such as were furnished with tickets" being allowed to walk through a suite of rooms hung with black cloth and lit by wax candles, to gaze on a coffin on which a complete suit of armour was placed, with a truncheon in its mailed hand, the collar of the Garter round its

neck, the riband on its breast, a sword by its side, and a ducal coronet at its feet.

The funeral which took place on August 9th, six weeks after his death, and to see which people flocked from the three kingdoms, was not less magnificent than that which had attended royalty. The procession was opened by military bands, a detachment of foot guards and artillery, heralds, officers, and ministers; after which came a funeral car modelled after that which had carried Queen Mary to her tomb; its gorgeous canopy heavy with plumes, military trophies, and badges. Underneath was the coffin covered by a black velvet pall reaching to the ground. This was followed by the chief mourner, the Duke of Montagu, "having a train cloak five yards long, and being supported by the Lords Godolphin and Sunderland, and assisted by eight dukes."

Next came the carriages of the King, Prince of Wales, and the nobility. Forty riders in mourning cloaks, and seventy-two pensioners from Chelsea Hospital, added impressiveness to this scene of woe, which, as the cannon thundered from the Tower, took its slow and solemn way from Marlborough House through St. James's Park to Hyde Park Corner, along Piccadilly to Pall Mall, and by Charing Cross to Westminster Abbey, where the service was conducted by the Dean, and a funeral anthem, specially composed for this occasion by Bononcini, was sung. The body was then lowered into a vault near the tomb of Henry VII., when the Garter King-at-Arms recited the

various titles and honours of the deceased, and concluded by saying "Thus it has pleased Almighty God to take out of this transitory world, into His mercy, the most high, mighty, and noble prince, John Duke of Marlborough."

No sooner had he finished than three rockets were set off at the east end of the Abbey, as a signal to the troops that were drawn up on the Parade at St. James's Park ; upon which, says the *Post Boy*, "three general and most complete volleys were given with about twenty pieces of artillery that were fired altogether ; and as many with the small arms of all the forces both horse and foot ; the whole being performed in excellent order."

Twenty years later the remains of the duke were removed from Westminster Abbey to the magnificent mausoleum at Blenheim, which the duchess had erected from designs by Rysbrach, and where they now rest.

To her the duke left a jointure of fifteen thousand a year, free of all charges and deductions ; she was also empowered to dispose of ten thousand pounds annually for five years in completing Blenheim Palace ; which, with the manor of Woodstock, had been settled on her already by Act of Parliament. She was at liberty to leave her own personal property and her paternal estate at Sandridge, to whichever of her grandchildren she pleased ; but Marlborough House was to become the property of the successor to the title.

After the payment of different legacies to his youngest daughter, the Duchess of Montagu, and to his grandchildren, the duke left the residue of his property to Henrietta, Countess of Godolphin, and her heirs male, with a reversionary entail on the male issue of his other daughters. To Lord Godolphin was assigned an annuity of five thousand a year in case he survived his wife ; whilst their son, Lord Rialton, the heir apparent to the dukedom, had an allowance of three thousand a year, which was to be increased to eight thousand when the building of Blenheim was finished.

Though the duchess's imperious temper had become historic, and her years numbered sixty-two at the time of her husband's death, yet her great wealth soon brought her suitors. The first of these fearless men was Thomas Earl of Coningsby, a politician who had held office under Queen Anne, a husband twice made a widower, a soldier who had fought side by side with William at the Boyne, and an old friend and adherent of the Marlboroughs. The impression the duchess gave him of her grief, was not strong enough to prevent him making his first matrimonial advances, within six weeks of the duke's funeral.

In a maudlin and effusive letter dated October 8th, 1722, and preserved amongst the Coxe MSS., my Lord Coningsby has nothing to say of her loss or her sorrow, but he tells her that when he had the honour to wait on her at Blenheim "it struck me to the heart to find you, the best, the worthiest, and the wisest of

women, with regard to your health and consequently to your precious life, in the worst of ways." That he was entirely of her mind, she must learn when he speaks of "the ingratitude of the world, the want of true friendship in it, and the most unnatural falsehood of nearest relatives," subjects on which her grace delighted to harangue, in almost the self-same phrases, and grievances with which he was ready to sympathise.

In the following month of November, he writes to her again from his house in Albemarle Street, concerning "his motherless little innocents," who under God had been his support from the dismal day when he "was so unfortunate to be deprived of the most delightful conversation of my dearest, dearest Lady Marlborough, to whom alone I could open the innermost thoughts of my loaded heart, and by whose exalted wisdom, and by a friendship more sincere than is now to be met in any other breast among all the men and women in the world, I found relief from all my then prevailing apprehensions, and was sometimes put in hope that the Great and Almighty Disposer of all things would, out of His infinite goodness to me, at His own time and in His own way, establish those blessings (which He then showed me but a glimpse of, and suffered me to enjoy but a moment) to me for the term of my happy life."

The hope labouredly expressed in this entangled sentence, was considerably chilled when he had the mortification to learn that she had been a day and a night in town without giving him the least notice of it.



"The dismal thoughts," writes this elderly and ridiculous swain, "that it brought into my head and heart, I will for my own ease strive for ever, for ever to forget." It was also no doubt for his own ease, that Sarah Duchess of Marlborough for ever, for ever refused to marry him ; for what pleasure could there be in commanding and hectoring such a foolish slave.

But no sooner was one suitor sent about his business than another appeared. The second was the proud Duke of Somerset, now a widower, having just lost the wife whom Her Grace of Marlborough cordially detested. If the Duke of Somerset had heard that a private letter written by him to Sarah had been sent to Queen Anne on whom it reflected, he thought well to forget it in placing his heart at her disposal. But the duke—who had no talents to support his arrogant pretensions, whose pride made him ridiculous, and who behaved with great tyranny to his family—was refused by the widow, who told him that marriage at her age would be unbecoming ; a piece of information which he who was three years her senior must have relished. She also magnificently declared that if she were only thirty, "she would not permit even the Emperor of the world to succeed in that heart which had been devoted to John Duke of Marlborough."

This lofty speech seemed to satisfy the proud duke, whose ardour cannot have been overwhelming ; for he immediately asked the duchess to recommend him a wife, on which she selected Lady Charlotte Finch, daughter of the Earl of Nottingham, who for her sins

became second Duchess of Somerset. The poor woman was soon to learn the manner of man she wedded, for one day having dared to tap him familiarly on the shoulder, he turned round in anger and amazement, and with a haughty air told her "my first duchess was a Percy, but she never took such a liberty."

Although the Duchess of Marlborough would not marry, she was busy in giving her granddaughter, Lady Isabella Montagu, in marriage the following year. The bride was daughter of the Duchess of Montagu, one of the most beautiful and sprightly women of her day ; and of John Duke of Montagu, of whom Sarah said "all his talents lie in things only natural in boys of fifteen years old, and he is about two and fifty ; to get people into his garden and wet them with squirts, and to invite people to his country houses and put things into their beds to make them itch, and twenty such pretty fancies like these."

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, in one of her lively letters written in April 1723, tells her correspondent that "Belle is at this instant in the paradisaical state of receiving visits every day from a passionate lover, who is her first love ; whom she thinks the finest gentleman in Europe, and is besides that, Duke of Manchester. Her mamma and I often laugh and sigh reflecting on her felicity." The happy pair were wedded on April 16th, 1723, and the young duchess who was extremely handsome, high spirited and witty, soon became the toast of gallants, the theme of poets, the admired of all

assemblies. Her mother and grandmother had long been at variance, when the late duke listening to their bitter speeches, used to say, he wondered they could not agree as they were so much alike. Notwithstanding this, Her Grace of Manchester managed to keep the favour of Duchess Sarah whose spirit and sharpness she had inherited. "You my sweet duchess," said the elder woman to her one day in an overflow of kindness, "You were always the best of God's creatures, and I love you mightily, but you have a *mother*." "Yes and *she* has a mother," came the quick reply.

The Duke of Manchester who was but three and twenty when he married, died sixteen years later in 1739. His duchess, who then seemed more beautiful and fascinating than in her girlhood, was beset by worshippers eager for her hand and her jointure, amongst whom was Henry Fox, afterwards Lord Holland, whom Sarah hated and dreaded lest he should succeed with her granddaughter; so that whenever she heard of an imprudent marriage she would say, "Ah well; I don't care who runs away with whom so long as the Fox doesn't carry off my goose."

From amongst the number of her admirers, the young Duchess of Manchester eventually selected Richard, Earl of Scarborough, for her second husband. Deeds were drawn, preparations made, and the day fixed for the wedding, but on the previous night the bridegroom elect committed suicide, without any apparent cause; so that it was said the act was done in a fit of insanity.

"I confess," writes Lady Mary Wortley Montagu,

"I looked upon his engagement with the duchess, not as the cause, but sign, that he was mad. I could wish for some authentic account of her behaviour on this occasion. I do not doubt she shines in it, as she has done in every other part of life." The duchess did not again select a husband until some eight years later, when her choice became a nine days' wonder. For she who was the most fastidious, most fashionable and exclusive of her set, who had received proposals from men of the highest rank, and was pursued by a train of admirers, elected to marry a Mr. Hussey, described as "a wild Irishman younger than herself, utterly unknown to all her set of company, and differing wildly from them in habits and manners."

Another granddaughter, her favourite amongst them all, in whose marriage the Duchess of Marlborough interested herself, was Lady Diana Spencer, a daughter of Lady Sunderland. Her grace's ambitions flew high, for the husband she selected for the girl was none other than Frederick Prince of Wales, son of George II.

It was not until a year after His Majesty, on the death of his father in 1727, ascended the throne, that the Prince was permitted to come to England; for since his childhood a bitter animosity had existed between himself and his parents, who kept him out of their way as long as possible.

The King, who considered his son "the greatest ass, and the greatest liar, and the greatest *canaille*, and the greatest beast in the whole world," and heartily wished he was out of it, kept him very short

of money, which he tried to gain by all kinds of contrivances; so that when the Duchess of Marlborough, knowing his wants, offered him a hundred thousand pounds if he would marry Lady Diana, he eagerly grasped at a prospect which would not only supply his needs but have the additional advantage of outraging his father. This union, which would gratify her grace's ambition as well as her grudge against Their Majesties, was arranged to take place secretly at the Great Lodge at Windsor, and the day for its celebration fixed. But Sir Robert Walpole got intelligence of the project and prevented it, when, says his son Horace, who tells the story, "the secret was buried in silence." From that time forward Sir Robert's person and politics became particularly obnoxious to the duchess. "I think 'tis thought wrong to wish anybody dead," says she, "but I hope 'tis none to wish he may be hanged for having brought to ruin so great a country as this."

The date of this intended marriage is not given, but Lady Diana Spencer became the wife of Lord John Russell, afterwards fourth Duke of Bedford, on October 11th, 1731, much to the gratification of her grandmother, who writing from Blenheim in the previous month to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, says, "All things are agreed upon and the writings drawing for Di's marriage with my Lord John Russell, which is in every particular to my satisfaction; but they cannot be married till we come to London. I propose more satisfaction in it than I thought had been in store

for me. I believe you have heard me say that I desired to die when I had disposed well of her ; but I desire that you would not put me in mind of it, for I find now I have a mind to live till I have married my Torismond, which name I have given long to John Spencer."

The duchess's satisfaction in this marriage was of short duration, for her favourite granddaughter died four years later.

On the demise of the Duke of Marlborough, his titles and honours were inherited by his eldest daughter, Henrietta, Countess of Godolphin, who then became Duchess of Marlborough. Frequent and violent disputes and disagreements had long since parted mother and daughter, who to the end remained unreconciled. As early as May 1720, Henrietta, then Lady Godolphin, complained to her father and her husband of the duchess, who in consequence wrote her son-in-law the following letter, which is preserved amongst the Morrison autographs.

"The occasion of giving you this trouble," says her grace, "proceeds from a very wrong account which I find your wife has given to her father of what passed between us upon Monday last, I hope only from her passion, which was the cause of her saying things so unbecoming her and me that I never intended to have mentioned the least word of it to the Duke of Marlborough and much less to you, till now that I find I am under a necessity of vindicating myself and that is so very just and naturall that I am sure no reasonable

person can blame me for it. I can't deny that I have sometimes complained of her unkind usage to those that I thought might help to mend it, without making an noise to the prejudice of either of us, but never in any way that she had any reason to take ill ; but having tryd in vain all manner of ways to make her sensible in any degree of my kindnesse to her, I had resolved to bear it without any farther struggle, or so much as complaining even to the Duke of Marlborough upon any occasion of that nature. However I was so much touched to find myself neglected to such a degree in my late sicknesse by a child that I loved so dearly, that I could not resist upon her last visit to tell her that I wishd to bee well that I mighte ease her of that great trouble she was under, in being oblidged to send or come once a day to know how I did.

"This reproach I must own I thought would have produced so easy an answer, as that she was ashamed she had not been more with me, but instead of that she immediately replyd that she believed I could remember that I could not give my time to my mother, and that she was no good talker, meaning that her company was worth little. This I did think so uncommon a style for a daughter to her mother, that it was impossible for me not to reproach her with such ill behaviour, and to appeal to her how little I had deserved it from her ; which was only the occasion of her telling me that she never desired her children should do better to her than she had don to me ; that she had the satisfaction of knowing

that the world was satisfyd with her upon that subject, but that I was unsatisfyd with my lady Sunderland and her sister Montagu, and shew that it was not her fault that she did not please me ; and then she praised for a quarter of an hour the dutifull behaviour of her sister Montagu, who she assured me she heard allways commended for her very good behaviour to me, whether I have been in the righte or the wrong in my complaints to the D of Mar. Considering how we live together, I think I need not say how offensive such a conversation must be from one's own child, not that she could mean it for nothing else but to provoke me."

Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough, with whose name scandal dealt freely, was a handsome and sprightly woman, clever and somewhat eccentric, fond of gaiety and company, who delighted in gathering women of fashion and men of wit around her, and who posed as a patroness of the Italian composer Bononcini, the rival of Handel. Seated in her box at the theatre, surrounded by dandies in satin and lace, spying glasses in their eyes, snuff boxes in their hands, she enjoyed the full-flavoured humour of Wycherley, Cibber, Vanbrugh, or Congreve ; whose comedies sparkling with wit and flavoured with indecency, but almost devoid of action, then delighted the town. From the playhouse her interests naturally spread to playwrights and poets, chief amongst her favourites being John Gay and William Congreve.

The latter, a brilliant dramatist and man of fashion,



and the descendant of an old Staffordshire family, was born at Bardsey near Leeds, but when an infant was taken to Ireland, where his father commanded a garrison and afterwards managed the estates of the Earl of Cork. Young Congreve was educated at Kilkenny, and at Trinity College, with a view to joining the Bar. But the law seemed a dull pursuit to one of his wit, his vivacious conversation, and his love of good society ; so that he was more often to be found in the coffee houses, at the tables of his noble friends, and at the theatre than in the Middle Temple.

His reputation for cleverness was raised when in 1692, he published a novel called "Incognita, or Love and Duty Reconciled," he being then one and twenty. In the summer of this same year he had written his first comedy, *The Old Bachelor*, but on reading it to the players his delivery was so bad, that they almost rejected it ; yet before he had finished, the manager, Thomas Davenant, was so persuaded of its excellence that he allowed its author "the privilege of the theatre" for six months before his comedy was put on its boards. The polished dialogue and brilliant epigrams of the play made it an immediate success, for it ran for fourteen consecutive nights, a remarkable proof of its popularity in those days, and from that time it held the stage.

His second play, *The Double Dealer*, appeared the following year, but it had little of the merit of his first, and was consequently a comparative failure ;

but he regained his reputation as a clever dramatist when *Love for Love* was produced at the Lincoln's Inn Theatre in 1695. In the same year he was made one of the Commissioners of hackney coaches, at a salary of a hundred per annum, this being the first of the Government posts he filled, which eventually brought him twelve hundred a year, and made him independent of his pen. This was a cause of no little satisfaction to Congreve, who prided himself on being above all things a fine gentleman, and affected to despise the works which had brought him fame. Indeed, when he received a visit from Voltaire, he spoke of them as trifles that were beneath him, and hinted in his first conversation with the Frenchman that he wished to be visited upon no other footing than that of a gentleman. "I answered," wrote Voltaire, "that had he been so unfortunate as to be a mere gentleman, I should never have come to see him; and I was much disgusted at so unseasonable a piece of vanity."

For many years Congreve lived on intimate terms with Mrs. Bracegirdle, who had taken prominent parts in his plays and was the greatest actress of her day. Their acquaintance which began in 1692, lasted until about 1722, when he was so constantly and publicly seen with her, that gossips asserted they were married. But in the latter year, he became acquainted with Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough, when he broke with Mrs. Bracegirdle, whose affection for him continued till the day of his death and after.

At this time when he became the intimate friend of Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough, Congreve had passed his fiftieth year, whilst his constitution had long been broken from severe attacks of gout, and cataracts threatened him with blindness. These drawbacks did not however, damp his wonderful powers of conversation, said to be the most entertaining of any man of his time, and which were no doubt all the more welcome to the duchess, because her husband happened to be a dull cypher.

In the spring of 1728, her grace, accompanied by Congreve, who a little while before had nearly died from gout in the stomach, and by John Gay, who was "languishing with a colick," set out to drink the waters at Bath, where the appearance of the duchess and her invalids, gave rise to lively gossip. Congreve's health seemed to improve, but on his return to town in the autumn, he received a severe shock and some injury from the upsetting of his coach. He was immediately taken to his house in Surrey Street, Strand, where he gradually sank and died on January 27th, 1729.

No sooner was he dead than the duchess decided to give him one of those costly and theatrical funerals which were then believed to show respect and affection for the dead ; she entering into all the details of the ghastly parade, and selecting the chief mourners, of whom her husband obligingly figured as one, and her brother-in-law, now Duke of Bridgewater, as another. The remains of the playwright who died three weeks

before reaching his sixtieth year, were borne in pomp and state to the Jerusalem Chamber, and afterwards interred in Westminster Abbey.

Three years previously Congreve had made his will, in which, after leaving sums of two hundred pounds to Mrs. Bracegirdle, and various needy relatives of his own, he left the residue of his estate, amounting to about ten thousand pounds, to Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough. In return she had a marble tablet erected to his memory bearing the words "Mr. William Congreve, died Jan. 19, 1728, and was buried near this place; to whose most valuable memory this monument is set up by Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough, as a mark how deeply she remembers the happiness and honour she enjoyed in the sincere friendship of so worthy and honest a man, whose virtue, candour, and wit gained him the love and esteem of the present age, and whose writings will be the admiration of the future."

With grim dissatisfaction the old Duchess of Marlborough heard of the foolish extravagance of erecting a monument to a poet; and her biting comment on the inscription was, "I know not what happiness she might have had in his company, but I am sure it was no honour."

The younger duchess bought herself a diamond necklace with the money left her by Congreve, and this she proudly showed to Dr. Young, author of "Night Thoughts," who was of opinion, which he had not the courage to express to her grace, that the



**HENRIETTA CHURCHILL,  
SECOND DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH**



money had far better be given to Mrs. Bracegirdle, then living in retirement. Henrietta's affection for Congreve's memory did not end in the erection of a monument, or the wearing of a chain brought with his money ; for she had a waxen image of Congreve made as large as life and dressed in his clothes, which was placed at her table, talked to, helped to food and wine, and at her command treated by the best physicians of the day for the gout, from which its bandaged legs were supposed to suffer.





## CHAPTER XI

The Last Years of the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough—Her Aversion to Sir Robert Walpole—Letter from the Bishop of Chichester—Her Grace replies—Quarrels with Her Daughters—Death of Henrietta Duchess of Marlborough—The New Duke—The Dowager's Wrath at His Marriage—Makes a Puppet Show to illustrate Her Grievance—The Singular Punishment of Lady Bateman—Her Grace's Favourite Grandson, Jack Spencer—His Prodigality—Fanny Murray's Contempt for Money—The Dowager pleads Her Case in the Court of Chancery—Refuses to part with the Diamond-hilted Sword—Eccentricities of the Duchess of Buckingham—Proud of Her Royal Descent—Intrigues to place James Stuart on the Throne—Her Answer to the Duchess of Marlborough—The Duchess of Shrewsbury diverts the Town—The Dowager Duchess on the Immortality of the Soul—Lively Letters to Lord Marchmont—Engaged in writing an Account of Her Conduct—Her Secretary, Nathaniel Hook—Negotiations with Pope to suppress Her "Character"—Reasons for writing Her Defence.



## CHAPTER XI

**I**N the last years of her life, Sarah Duchess of Marlborough spent her time in marrying her granddaughters, in quarrelling with her daughters, in roundly abusing royalty, in reviling the Government, in plaguing the Treasury about the stipend of five or six hundred a year attached to the Rangership of Windsor Park, but above all in increasing her wealth and acquiring landed property; so that this lonely old woman, whose income was about forty thousand per annum, went into the City when she was close upon her eightieth year, that she might bid for Lord Yarmouth's estates; whilst, when in her eighty-fourth, and only a few months before her death, she was making enquiries of Lord Marchmont, concerning an estate near Windsor which she desired to buy, and entering into details regarding it with a shrewdness that would have done honour to a child of Israel.

Her particular political aversion continued to be Sir Robert Walpole, whom she blamed for wrongs and slights she believed herself to suffer from, and her denunciations of him were bitter in consequence. In

reference to this feud on her part, her old friend, who had been tutor to her son and chaplain to her husband, Dr. Hare, Bishop of Chichester, writing to her from Barnes as early as August 26th, 1726, tells her that on the previous Tuesday he had waited on the Princess of Wales, who mentioned her grace's quarrels with Walpole, on which the bishop paid a visit to the statesman to speak of them. The latter being at leisure, entered very frankly and fully into them, and protested he had not the least design of disobliging the duchess, or the least thought of incurring her displeasure ; for as he considered himself obliged to her for the sum she had lent the Government, he was always ready to serve her ; and he so little suspected that she was out of humour with him, that he had thought himself on a good footing with her until she expressed so much resentment towards him.

Walpole then entered into particulars of the causes of her anger ; taxes on Windsor Park, and forbidding her in common with some others, to share the privilege of driving through St. James's Park, the King having complained of the number of coaches that passed through what was then his private grounds.

The bishop, in continuing his letter, hopes it will be unnecessary for him to say that he had the most affectionate esteem for her, and not only esteem but admiration for her fine understanding and good sense, and for the just and noble sentiments which she expresses on all occasions in the best language and the

most agreeable manner, so that one cannot hear her without pleasure ; “ but,” says his lordship, “ the more I esteem and admire what is excellent in your grace, the more concerned am I to see any blemishes in so great a character.

“ Ill-grounded suspicions, violent passions, and a boundless liberty of expressing resentment of persons without distinction from the Prince downwards, and that in the most public manner, and before servants, are certainly blemishes, and not only so but attended with great inconveniences ; they lessen exceedingly the influence and interests persons of your grace’s fortune and endowments would otherwise have, and unavoidably create enemies. It is I think confessed to be one of the most prudent rules of life, for persons in all stations not to give needless and unnecessary offence, since no person is so great as not to want on many occasions for themselves, or relations, or friends, the favour and good will of others ; and least of all is it desirable to incur the settled displeasure or ill-wish of a Prince ; since he can seldom want long an opportunity of making it felt in some degree or other.”

The Bishop must have wondered how such plain speaking would be received ; but the duchess, who through life had prided herself on telling unpleasant truths in a vigorous manner to others, could not resent the same treatment from an old friend to herself. She therefore answered by telling the Bishop she had read Montaigne, and remembered he said that one could not give a greater proof of friendship than in venturing to

disoblige a friend in order to serve them, and that she was entirely of his opinion.

"And even when I am not convinced that I have done wrong, I always take it kindly ; and therefore I am confident I shall never forget it though you desire me ; and in this I imitate your humble servant Dy, (Lady Diana Spencer) for when I made a sort of an apology for telling her anything that may prevent any mischief to her, she always says she loves me better for telling her any fault, and I desire you will believe that my nature is the same ; and I beg of you never to have the least scruple in telling me anything you think, for I am not so partial to myself, as not to know that I have many imperfections, but a great fault I will never have, that I know to be one."

She then enters into a long defence of herself, and was exceedingly sore that the Duchess of Buckingham, although she had written an impertinent letter to the King, was yet allowed to drive her coach through St. James's Park, just as royalty did. Nor did the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough's hatred or abuse of Walpole cease, in return for which he eventually found means to punish her. For when she set about purchasing several old dwellings fronting Marlborough House, in order to pull them down and give a more spacious and dignified entrance to her town residence, Walpole quickly bought their leases and so thwarted her intentions.

At various times in her career she had been in the habit of writing narratives of the events in which she had taken part ; and to those manuscript pages, many

of the descriptions in these volumes are due. Soon after her husband's death she set about giving a full and true account, according to her own ideas, of her disagreements with her daughters, which when finished, was sent to different friends for their information and her own defence.

In forwarding a copy to Mrs. Godolphin, a connection of her son-in-law, the duchess says she has not been to see anybody that she could well avoid for a great while, but she can no longer hold from writing to her on a very melancholy subject because, says she, "I am sure you cannot but have heard all the vile things that have been reported of me, which has forced me to collect a great many disagreeable things in order to vindicate myself to those that I value most, and as I have had reason allways to think you my friend, I desire the feavour of you to read this long paper. You will see by it how long I have endeavoured to hide my misfortunes from the world, but now that there is hardly a possibility of a reconcilment between me and my children, from the very injurious aspersions which they have publickly thrown upon me, I neither can nor I think ought to suffer any longer under it ; and if I had not taken so much pains to conceal their faults, at the same time that they and their wretched friends were making all manner of false reports of me, I believe it had not been possible for them to have prevailed so much as they have don. I have known people of the most calme temper very much warmed upon account of their repetation, and having boare what I have done

for so many years, rather than hurt my children, I hope nobody will blame me now for what I do, which I am forced to by them to prevent my being pointed at where ever I goe."

One of these children, Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough, died in 1733. Her only son, William, Marquis of Blandford, predeceased her by two years, leaving no heirs, when the title and honours passing to the Spencer line, Charles, fifth Earl of Sunderland, succeeded to the dukedom of Marlborough, on which he assumed the name and arms of Churchill in conjunction with those of Spencer. According to Horace Walpole, he was modest and diffident, had good sense, infinite generosity, and not more economy than was to be hoped for in a young man of such vast expectations. But whilst having many good qualities, and opposing the Court to humour his grandmother, she never liked him, her favourite being his brother, commonly called Jack Spencer, whose habits were dissipated and whose extravagance was boundless.

In May 1732, and only a few months before he inherited the ducal title, he had irretrievably offended his grandmother, by marrying a girl endowed with good looks and a great fortune, but who was the daughter of Lord Trevor, an enemy of the first duke. At this her grace's rage knew no bounds, and it was but a small satisfaction to her desire for vengeance that she was able to turn her grandson and his wife out of the Little Lodge at Windsor, which she had lent him. When they had gone it pleased her to



think that they, together with the bride's cousins, had stripped the house and garden ; and, to illustrate and exhibit her grievance, the duchess had a puppet-show made representing the hated Trevor girls tearing up shrubs and flowers, whilst the new-made wife was seen escaping with a chicken-coop under her arm.

Nor was her anger at this marriage limited to her grandson ; for, finding it had been brought about by his sister, Lady Mary Spencer, wife of Viscount Bateman, who had great influence over her brother, she looked about for some means of justly punishing this abominable offender. At last she hit upon what seemed to her a happy idea. She already possessed a portrait of my Lady Bateman, which she now made the means of her vengeance. "She did not give it away," says Louisa Louisa Stuart, who tells the story, "nor sell it to a broker ; nor send it up to a lumber garret ; nor even turn its front to the wall. She had the face blackened over, and this sentence, '*She is much blacker within*,' inscribed in large characters on the frame ; and thus placed in her usual sitting-room, it was exhibited to all beholders."

On inheriting the ducal title and property, Charles Spencer was obliged, according to the will of the first duke, to hand over the Sunderland estates to his younger brother John Spencer. Though the latter was a rake who drank deep and played high, and was far more extravagant than his brother, yet, as has been said, he was his grandmother's favourite, whom she loved, admired, and forgave. Both brothers made

it a rule that they would never "dirty their fingers with silver"; and accordingly, when they ordered a bottle of wine at a tavern, a scramble followed amongst the waiters to attend them; whilst their calling for a chair was always the signal for a free fight amongst the carriers anxious to handle a guinea or two.

Jack Spencer's prodigality appeared to communicate itself to those he associated with, and especially to Fanny Murray, a sprightly wench with whom he lived on intimate terms; for, as an instance of her wastefulness, it is told that one night, whilst at supper with a company of gallant men, she complained of the want of money, when Sir Robert Atkins immediately gave her a twenty-pound note. "Damn your twenty pounds," says she contemptuously. "What does it signify?" and she clapped it between two pieces of bread-and-butter and ate it.

Though the dowager duchess, who loved money dearly, intended to make this spendthrift her heir, she was unwilling to give his brother the duke what was legally his; so that, to settle a dispute regarding some portion of his inheritance, they agreed to what was called an amicable lawsuit. But to arrange anything amicably was impossible to her grace, who amused the town by going in person to the Court of Chancery to plead her case. In the course of the proceedings the question was debated as to who should keep the diamond-hilted sword given to the great duke by a foreign sovereign, when the duchess, rising to her full height, excitedly said, "That sword *my*

lord would have carried to the gates of Paris. Am I to live to see the diamonds picked off one by one and lodged at the pawnbroker's?"

Though her grace's vagaries, sharp speeches, and quarrels amused the town, it was likewise diverted by a woman of equal rank and greater eccentricity. This was the Duchess of Buckingham, a daughter of James II. and of the Countess of Dorchester, who was also a woman of strong individuality. It was the latter who, in wondering why she and those holding the same position as herself had been selected by her royal lover, remarked, "we are none of us handsome, and if we have wit he has not enough to find it out." The Duchess of Buckingham's pride at her royal though illegitimate birth was inordinate; to humble which her mother told her when they quarrelled, that she need not be so vain, for she was not the King's daughter but Colonel Graham's, which made the younger woman furious.

To show the world she was of kingly descent, she rigorously kept the anniversary of Charles the First's death; for on that solemn day, dressed in deep mourning, seated in a chair of state in the great drawing-room of Buckingham House, and surrounded by her Ladies-in-Waiting also in weeds, she received the friends who offered their sympathies. On other occasions she attended the opera in regal robes of scarlet and ermine, and turned her back on those who she considered had usurped the throne.

In the previous reign the peace-loving Anne had

granted permission to the duchess to drive her coach through the enclosures of St. James's Park, a privilege which her grace determined to retain under the new monarch. But one day soon after the King's arrival, her coach was stopped by the keepers, when she was respectfully told that none but royalty were now allowed to pass that way. At this the duchess put her head out of the window and said, "Tell the King that if it is reserved for royalty, he has no more right to it than I have," and she ordered her coach to drive on. On this being repeated to George I., who according to his friend Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, "looked upon his acceptance of the crown as an act of usurpation, which was always uneasy to him," he laughed good-naturedly, and gave orders that the duchess should be allowed to pass through any part of the park she pleased.

A thousand stories of her whims and sayings were told in the coffee-houses and at assemblies; and amongst others of her treatment of Angelo Maria Cori, the prompter of the opera. One day when she went to pay him for her box, this wretched man had the impudence to be from home. On calling an hour later she stopped his profuse apologies by asking if he meant to treat her like a tradeswoman? She added that she would teach him the respect due to her birth, and commanded him to wait on her next morning at nine. The polite foreigner was at Buckingham House at the hour appointed, and there he was kept till eight at night, during which time she sent him merely an

omelet and a bottle of wine ; for the day being Friday and he a Catholic, she explained that she supposed he did not eat meat. In the evening, half famished and wholly weary, she admitted him to her presence with all the form of a princess giving an audience to an ambassador. When he had gone she triumphantly exclaimed, "Now he has been punished."

Since the accession of the House of Hanover, she had busied herself with intrigues, as open as they were foolish, to place her brother James Stuart on the throne. For this purpose she made journeys to Rome, where he was then living, but always avoided the French Court on her way through Paris, because she would not be received there as a princess of the blood. In Rome it was otherwise, for even when she attended the opera in that city, her box was decorated with the royal crown. Though whilst in Paris she avoided the Court, she always visited the Church of the Benedictines in the Faubourg St. Jacques, where the body of James II, was kept unburied in the hope of its being one day removed to England. Here she knelt and wept beside the remains of the late King, when seeing her emotion one day, a monk in charge took the opportunity of pointing out that the pall, covering the coffin, had become very threadbare, expecting that the duchess would replace it ; but her filial affection was not great enough to afford such expense.

In the hope of winning Sir Robert Walpole's help in placing James Stuart on the throne, she reminded him that, as a reward for restoring the royal family,

Lord Clarendon had been allowed "to match his daughter to the Duke of York"; a hint of the great things that might be in store for the minister, who only smiled at her. But this did not prevent her from conveying letters to him from her brother, which Sir Robert always handed to the King, which, when endorsed by him, were returned to the duchess.

Though His Majesty persisted in taking her treason so playfully, her grace was deadly in earnest in her endeavours to deprive him of the crown; and on leaving England for Rome, always made over her property in trust to some friend, lest it should be forfeited for her dark conspiracies. On one of these occasions her estates were left in the custody of the Earl of Bath, who on her return, could not find the deed by which they were entrusted to him. All search unfortunately failed to find it, when the duchess grew clamorous and appealed to her friend Lord Mansfield, who told the earl he could never show his face unless he produced the document, shortly after which he had the good luck to find it.

Her husband, who being a wit, must have enjoyed her extravagances, left her and this world in 1721, when she gave him a splendid and costly funeral. This was eclipsed in the following year by the spectacle of the Duke of Marlborough's procession to the grave, much to her grace of Buckingham's discomfort. However when her only son, a weak lad not then of age, died in 1735, she resolved to give the town such a sight as it had not witnessed before. She

began by having a wax figure of the lad laid out in regal state, when she sent word to her friends that if they had a mind to see it "she would carry them in conveniently by a back door." She next asked the Duchess of Marlborough to lend her the late duke's funeral car; when Sarah indignantly replied, "It carried my Lord Marlborough and shall never be used for anybody else." Her grace of Buckingham was not to be silenced by such an answer, for she at once wrote back, "I have consulted with the undertaker and he tells me I may have a finer for twenty pounds."

Though Sarah Duchess of Marlborough remained mentally vigorous, her health had begun to fail and her years to impress their weight upon her. Writing to the Earl of Marchmont in December 1735, when she was in her seventy-sixth year, she complains of having the gout, and that her limbs are much weaker than they were. "At my age," she adds, "I cannot expect to continue long, nor have I now anything left to make me desirous of it." In the same letter she says it is a long time since she had the honour to pay her duty at Court; "but I was told," she continues, "that very lately a very great lady took occasion publicly in the drawing-room to talk of the poor dear Duke of Marlborough in the most foolish and indecent manner that ever anybody did. But I think what that person says can do nobody any hurt, not even herself, because she never passed one day without affronting somebody or other, and sometimes when it is intended for compliments."

The very great lady referred to, was probably the Duchess of Shrewsbury, formerly Adelaide, Marchioness di Paleotti, an Italian widow with whom the Duke of Shrewsbury had long been intimate whilst abroad, and whom her brothers compelled him to marry when he would have returned to England without her. Sarah Duchess of Marlborough who disliked her, described the Duchess of Shrewsbury as "a very old woman, an Italian Papist, who had upon this marriage professed herself a Protestant." On her arrival in this country, she had been received at Court and by society as if no dark tales besmirched her character. A woman of lively manner and quick wit, her doings and sayings soon made her the laughter of her circle, in which she heartily joined.

In time she became proud of furnishing the town with amusement, and she told Lady Strafford that a story was told about her, the duchess, every year, but she liked that best which represented her as going to Lady Oxford and saying, "Madam, I and my lord are so weary of talking politics. What are you and your lord?" On which Lady Oxford sighed and said she knew no lord but the Lord Jehovah; when the duchess made answer "Oh dear me, who is that? I believe 'tis one of the new titles, for I never heard of him before."

The same authority for this tale, tells another of her grace, in writing to Lord Strafford: "The Duchess of Shrewsbury is at present very happy," says this gossip, "for Colonel Murry is come from Scotland,



with whom the town says she has an intreague. She is in that as well as in all other things, not in the common way ; for last week in the Drawing-room, Col Murry came in ; so she run to everybody she knew 'Oh' says she 'here is Colonel Murry ; the town says I have an intreague with him, so I should not give him any of my pretty kind eyes, but I will and smile on him too.'"

On the arrival of George I. in England, the duchess, who could speak French and German fluently—the only languages His Majesty understood—made herself most agreeable to him ; playing sixpenny ombre with him, telling him diverting stories that made him chuckle with laughter, and gaining his favour to such a degree that the courtiers declared she was a rival of Madame Kilmansegg, the King's mistress who had escaped from her creditors in Hanover, and joined His Majesty in crossing to his new dominions.

Writing from Windsor Lodge in 1736, the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough says : "One of my chief pleasures is, that after such an hour, in this place, I am sure I can see nobody. At Marlborough House it is very different ; for there are many visitors, though few that have any sense, or that are capable of any friendship or truth. I would desire no more pleasure than to walk about my gardens and parks, but alas that is not permitted ; for I am generally wrapped up in flannel, and wheeled up and down my rooms in a chair. I cannot be very solicitous for life upon such terms, when I can only live to have more fits of

the gout. . . . I never design to see Blenheim again ; in a lodge I have everything convenient and without trouble."

However she still continued to live, and five years later on December 10th, 1741, Horace Walpole who heartily disliked the duchess because of her enmity to his father Sir Robert, in writing to a friend says :

"Old Marlborough is dying—but who can tell? Last year she had lain a great while ill without speaking ; her physicians said 'she must be blistered or she will die.' She called out 'I won't be blistered and I won't die.' If she takes the same resolution now I don't believe she will." She evidently did take the same resolution, for she lived for nearly three years after this date ; the greater part of her time being spent at Blenheim, which she had seen finished, at Windsor Lodge, which was her favourite residence, or at Holywell House St. Albans, where so much of her early married life had been spent.

Writing from one of these homes, which is not specified, on March 3rd, 1742, to the Earl of Marchmont, she says "I give you many thanks for the favour of your letter ; and it is a pleasure to me to find that you approve of my inclination in choosing a quiet life in the country rather than being in London. As I am of the simpler sex and four score, I am sure I have nothing that can tempt me to change my inclination, since I can be of no use to anybody ; and though I know some that are very agreeable to converse with, the uncertainty of seeing them, from

their own natural calls and my ill-health, makes me choose to live as I do, till something unavoidable forces me to Marlborough House, where I cannot avoid many troubles, which very much overbalances the very few that I can hope to converse with."

After gently referring to the tyrants and fools that had nearly brought the country to ruin, and the knaves who to gain more were willing to hazard the losing of all, she comes to more personal matters and declares she is much obliged to his lordship and to Mr. Pope for having the least thought of calling to see her; but at the same time the gout, from which she continually suffers, prevents her from having any pleasure in conversation.

"But I think," she continues, "I am in no present danger of death, and when it does come I hope I shall bear it patiently, though I own I am not arrived at so much philosophy as not to think torturing pain an evil; that is the only thing that I now dread, for death is unavoidable; and I cannot find that anybody has yet demonstrated whether it is a good thing or a bad one. Pray do not think me wicked in saying this; and if you talk to Mr. Pope of me, endeavour to keep him my friend, for I do firmly believe the immortality of the soul, as much as he does, though I am not learned enough to have found out what it is; but as I am sure there must be some Great Power that formed this world, that Power will distinguish with rewards and punishments, otherwise the wicked would be happier than the good, the first

of which generally gratify all their passions, and those that are most worthy are generally ill-treated and most unhappy.

"I have tired you a great while with writing upon things that you know I cannot possibly understand"; she concludes, "but this truth I can assure you, that since I can remember, though I can give no account of how it came to be so, I never feared anything so much, as to do the least thing that I imagined could possibly bring any shame upon me; and therefore I hope, that for small omissions my punishment will not be severe, when I go out of this world; and I think there cannot possibly be a worse place of any long continuance than this is at present."

Answers to this letter were sent by Lord Marchmont and Pope, who banteringly assured her she was the head of a school of philosophy in which they would fain become scholars. In replying on March 15th, she told the earl if she could only receive such notes continually, she would never come to town; for in that way of conversing she could have all the pleasure she could possibly propose "without the disappointment when Mr. Pope falls asleep, or the dread of your taking leave, because you were weary. In this way of conversing I can make the visits as long as I please, by reading them (the letters) over and over again, and by staying here, avoid all that is disagreeable to my temper at London, where I must go in a very little while; and when I am there, I shall see you sometimes uncertainly, which is a delightful thing,

for I cannot be of the opinion, that expectation makes a blessing dear ; I think it seldom or never pays one for the trouble of it ; but I shall always be pleased to see your lordship and Mr. Pope, when you will be so bountiful as to give me any part of your time."

After giving a straightforward blow to the base and foolish politicians who vexed her spirit, she continues by saying she believes her correspondent is as ignorant as herself as to what the soul is ; but she persists in thinking there must be rewards and punishments in the after life. She had lately been reading the works of some of her dear friends the philosophers, who gave it as their opinion that the soul never died, but went into some other man or beast ; and that seemed to her an excellent argument for its immortality.

"And though the philosophers prove nothing to my understanding certain," she says, "yet I have a great mind to believe that kings' and first ministers' souls, when they die, go into chimney sweepers. And their punishment is, that they remember they were great monarchs, were complimented by the Parliament upon their great abilities, and thanked for the great honour they did nations in accepting of the crown, at the same time that they endeavoured to starve them, and were not capable of doing them the least service, though they gave him all the money in the nation. This I think would be some punishment, though not so much as they deserve, supposing the great persons they had been, and the condition they were reduced to.

“What gave me this thought of a chimney sweeper was an accident. My servants that are very careful of me, were fearful that, having a fire night and day four months together in my chamber, I might be frightened when I could not rise out of my bed, if the chimney was on fire, and persuaded me to have it swept, which I consented to ; and one of the chimney sweepers was a little boy, a most miserable creature without shoes, stockings, breeches or shirt. When it was over I sent a servant of mine to Windsor with him, to equip this poor creature with what he wanted, which cost very little, not being so well dressed as the last Privy Seal, Lord Hervey. And as I could not be sure the souls of these chimney sweepers had come from great men, I could not repent of their being so much overpaid as they were.”

The remainder of this letter is taken up by an account of her latest grievance. Being weary of bailiffs, stewards, agents and lawyers, she desired to lend some money to the Government upon the land tax, but Mr. Sandys, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, said that Government would take no money of hers if he could hinder it, and gave as his reason that she had spoken ill of him, which much diverted her grace.

The special object of her visit to London, mentioned in her reply to Lord Marchmont, was to undertake the writing of a book describing some of the incidents of her life at Court, and giving the letters written to her by Queen Anne, on the political events or family incidents touched on ; they being a selection of those

she had threatened to publish during that Sovereign's lifetime. This booklet, which was first given to the public in 1742, when its author was in her eighty-second year, was called "An Account of the Conduct of the Dowager-Duchess of Marlborough, from her first coming to Court to the year 1710." Its contents were little more than a resetting of certain narratives she had written years previously for the defence of her actions, and the enlightenment of her friends. As she desired the help of some literary man to prepare them for the Press, the polite Lord Chesterfield recommended Nathaniel Hooke, whom Bishop Warburton described as "a mystic and quietist and a warm disciple of Fenelon."

Nathaniel Hooke, the son of a sergeant-at-law, like so many another, had been ruined by the South Sea scheme. He had then become an author by profession, for which his dulness little fitted him, and diligently busied himself in writing his Roman history. On being recommended by Lord Chesterfield to the duchess, as a secretary, he had waited on her grace, whom he found in bed. Causing herself to be propped up, this infirm but indomitable old woman entered into a conversation with him that lasted six hours, and might have gone on much longer if he had not become exhausted from want of food. From that day forward, the work she engaged him to help her with was continued, she talking to him for hours, without the aid of notes, but delivering her narrative in a lively and connected manner. She would not, however, allow her letters

to leave her possession, which probably led Hooke to the opinion he afterwards expressed, that they were garbled. So pleased was she at first with her amanuensis, that she would have him live in her house, and whilst there employed him on a delicate mission.

Some time previously her grace, whose earnest endeavours were directed to honour the memory of her dead lord, had offered a handsome reward to Alexander Pope—with whom the correspondence just quoted shows she wished to stand well—if he would write a laudatory poem or “Character” regarding the late duke. But though Pope by no means despised money, he refused this bribe, as he was no admirer of the great general, whom he had described, in some trenchant lines, unpublished at this date, as one whom the meanest need not envy.

It is more than probable that the duchess was unaware of this, but it is certain she knew that Pope had satirised herself under the name of Atossa, with that sardonic scorn which was the scourge and dread of his enemies. With some sense of humour he had read this poem to the Duchess of Buckingham, telling her it was intended for Sarah of Marlborough, to the great satisfaction of his hearer ; and then had it read to the latter with the assurance that it was intended for Her Grace of Buckingham. But the references to her fury, hatred, ingratitude, and “unrespected age,” soon revealed to the astute Sarah, whose portrait the poet had sketched ; when she suddenly called out, “ I



cannot be so imposed upon ; I see plainly enough for whom these lines are designed," and then followed vigorous and plentiful abuse of the diminutive poet who had written them.

She was wise enough, however, to keep civil with Pope, for it became her greatest fear that he would give this likeness of her sketched in vitriol to the world. Knowing that Nathaniel Hooke was a friend of Pope, she secretly commissioned him to treat on her behalf with the poet for the suppression of his lines ; when on her paying the round sum of a thousand pounds, Pope promised to destroy them. So grateful was the duchess to Hooke, that she rewarded him with five thousand pounds ; and then, after showing him much favour, she suddenly quarrelled with and dismissed him. The cause of this, according to Hooke, was, that finding her grace without religion, he thought it an act of no common charity to give her his own ; which the duchess put more tersely by saying " the man had striven to convert her to Popery."

Compliments, presents of venison, and friendly letters now passed between her grace and Pope ; to whom she sent a manuscript copy of the account of her conduct, to read and comment on. In reply he wrote to her : " I can't express to your grace the satisfaction the reading of your papers gave me, as they are now *dressed*, as you call it. When the remainder is ornamented a little in the like manner, they will certainly be fit to appear anywhere, and (like truth and beauty) *conquer* wherever they *appear*. Thus you have my

judgment and advice in one word which you asked and (which is more than you asked) under my hand."

This show of friendliness continued up to the date of his death, May 30th, 1744, shortly before which she received the last letter he wrote to her, in which he said :—

"I was unwilling to inform you how bad I was, and am unwilling to inform you how bad I am still, tho' I've again let blood and taken a hundred medicines. I am become the whole business now of my two servants, and have not, and yet cannot stir from my bed and fireside. All this I meant to have hid from you by my little note yesterday. For I really think you feel too much concern for those you think your friends, and I would rather die quietly, and slink out of the world, than give any good heart much trouble for me living or dead. The first two or three days that I feel any life return I will pass a part of it at your bedside. In the meantime I beg God to make our condition supportable to us both."

On hearing of his death, the dowager duchess, who must have had her suspicions of Pope's good faith, became anxious to have his papers examined, lest he had left the dreaded character amongst them. She therefore appealed to her friend Lord Marchmont to have a search made of the poet's manuscripts, by permission of Viscount Bolingbroke, whom Pope had appointed as his literary executor. Lord Marchmont both spoke and wrote on this subject to Lord Bolingbroke, who in replying to him says :—

"The arrival of your servant with the message from Lord Stair gives me an opportunity of telling you that I continue in the resolution I mentioned to you last night, upon what you said to me from the Duchess of Marlborough. It would be a breach of that trust and confidence which Pope reposed in me to give any one such of his papers as I think that no one should see. If there are any that may be injurious to the late duke or to her grace, even indirectly or covertly, as I hope there are not, they shall be destroyed; and you shall be a witness to their destruction."

At the time this was written Lord Bolingbroke had not made himself acquainted with the poet's affairs; but when he had he quickly wrote to Lord Marchmont saying, "Our friend Pope, it seems, corrected and prepared for the press, just before his death, an edition of the four Epistles that follow the Essay on Man. They are printed off and are now ready for publication. I am sorry for it, because if he could be excused for writing the character of Atossa formerly, there is no excuse for his design of publishing it after the favour you and I know; and the character of Atossa is inserted. I have a copy of the book. Warburton has the proprietary of it, as you know. Alter it he cannot by the terms of the will. Is it worth while to suppress this edition, or should her grace's friends say, (as they may from several strokes in it) that it was not intended for her character, and should she despise

it? If you come over hither we may talk better than write on the subject."

Consultation resulted in having the edition suppressed, for which no doubt the duchess was willing to compensate the publisher, and the offensive lines never saw the light during her grace's life; but two years after her death they were published in a folio sheet, when, it is to be hoped, they had no longer power to vex her spirit.

Meanwhile the "Account of her Conduct"—which after the fashion of the day, was addressed as a letter to a noble lord—had been given to the public. The duchess begins by saying she had been often told that some people were indifferent, not only as to whether they should be remembered after death, but whether, in case their names survived them, they should be mentioned with praise or infamy. This was a philosophy infinitely beyond her reach, and she owned it seemed to her too refined and sublime to be attained by anybody who had not first got rid of the prejudices of common sense and common honesty. She will not pretend to say that the passion for fame may not sometimes be excessive and deservedly the subject of ridicule; but she thinks there never was a single instance of an honourable person who was willing to be spoken of, either during life or after it, as a betrayer of his country or of his friend.

After having shrewdly remarked that those who are indifferent as to what the world will say of them

when they are out of it, are quite as unconcerned to deserve a good character whilst they are in it, she continues that, for her part, she frankly confesses that from the moment she could distinguish between good and evil, her ambition had been to gain a good name.

"My chief aim," she writes, "if I have any acquaintance with my own heart, has been, both in public and private life, to deserve approbation ; but I have never been without an earnest desire to have it too, both living and dead, from the wise and virtuous. My lord, this passion has led me to take more pains than you would easily imagine. It has sometimes carried me beyond the sphere to which the men have thought proper, and, generally speaking, with good reason, to confine our sex."

She then states that after her dismissal from Queen Anne's service, she had drawn up an account of her own conduct which she intended to publish immediately, but was dissuaded from doing so by a person of great eminence in his day, whom she thought her friend, who considered that prejudice and passion were then too violent to allow the voice of reason to be heard ; but that these would in time subdue and the truth would then unavoidably prevail. "I followed the advice with the less reluctance," writes the duchess, "as being sure of the power of an easy vindication whenever my patience should be push'd to extremity."

Later she wrote another account of her conduct

regarding political parties and "the successful artifice of Mr. Harley and Mrs. Masham in taking advantage of the Queen's passion for what she called the Church, to undermine me in her affections"; which was not intended to be published until after her death. "But my Lord," she continues, "as I am now drawing near my end, and very soon there will remain nothing of me but a name, I am grown desirous, under the little capacity which age and infirmities have left me for other enjoyments, to have the satisfaction before I die of seeing that name (which from the station I have held in the great world must unavoidably survive me) in possession of what was only designed it for a legacy. From this desire I have caused the several pieces above mentioned to be connected together, and thrown into the form, in which I now take the liberty to address them to your lordship."

## CHAPTER XII

Storm produced by the Dowager Duchess's Book—She does not care what Fools or Mad People say—Employ<sup>s</sup> Henry Fielding to help Her in writing a Vindication—The Duchess of Buckingham draws near Her Death—The Ruling Passion strong in Death—She makes Preparations for a Pompous Funeral—Wishes to be laid beside King James—Strange Vicissitudes attending His Majesty's Remains—Candles burn round Them for over a Century—Charles Duke of Marlborough and His Grandmother—He knows not Right or Wrong—The Dowager Duchess erects a Statue to Queen Anne—Dwells on Former Days—Purchases a Chamber Organ Which beguiles Her Loneliness—Anxious to have a Biography of Her Husband written—Collects Papers and Letters for the Purpose—Employs Two Literary Men Whom She instructs—Her Desire is never gratified—Her Death at Marlborough House—The Terms of Her Will—Jack Spencer becomes Her Heir.





## CHAPTER XII

THE Account of her Conduct, produced a storm which probably the duchess had not anticipated. Coffee-house pamphleteers, ballad-mongers, writers for the news sheets, and politicians, seizing on the book, contradicted or drew disparaging remarks from its statements, defended those it censured, and condemned her conduct towards Queen Anne. Bitter indeed must have been her feelings when she who was fated to war with the world to the end of her days, read these hostile comments on her pages; and although she declared, "I do not care what fools or mad people say of me, which will always be a great majority," she at the same time set about answering one of the pamphlets which above all others was more circumstantial in its statements, more severe in its criticism. This bore the lengthy title, "A Review of a Late Treatise entitled An account of the Conduct of the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough, etc. In which many misrepresentations are detected, several Obscure Passages searched into and explained, and Abundance of False Facts set in their true

Light ; especially such as relate to the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary, in a Letter to a Person of Distinction."

As her grace could rely on the evidence of those living to prove the truth of her statements, and could quote letters which there was no denying, she was assured of having the best of the controversy. But she needed help to marshal her facts and arrange her arguments ; and having dismissed Nathaniel Hooke, she looked about for some one capable of giving a literary form to her reply. Eventually her choice fell on Henry Fielding, who about this time had published his first novel "Joseph Andrews."

Although the son of a general, the grandson of a baronet, and the great-grandson of an earl, this remarkable man found himself in early life in circumstances so unkind, that he had, as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu relates, to choose between the career of a hackney coachman and the career of a hackney writer. Selecting the latter, he began by trying his hand at plays ; then as now the most profitable form of literary work, his first comedy coming out at Drury Lane in 1727, when he was at the sprightly age of one and twenty. From that time he wrote a number of plays to suit the public taste and succeeded in making enough money for the hour, which satisfied a man who was wholly indifferent to the needs of next day. But at the age of thirty, he gave up playwriting, married a wife whom he passionately loved, studied law, and was called to the Bar in 1740.

Though the greatest affection existed between himself and his wife, both were made miserable by his irremediable improvidence ; for he was no sooner in possession of a few pounds than he spent them in reckless extravagance, sometimes living in decent lodgings, at others in a miserable garret without the necessaries of life ; now hiding from bailiffs and again locked up in a sponging house. Always needing money despite his genius and his friends, yet quite happy when placed before a venison pasty and a flask of champagne, this irresponsible man, who was destined to write "Tom Jones," the greatest novel of his day, was at this time glad to act as a hack writer, politely called secretary, to the Duchess of Marlborough.

So between them they drew up a pamphlet of forty pages, called "A full Vindication of the Duchess Dowager of Marlborough ; Both with regard to the Account lately published by her Grace, and to her Character in general ; against the base and malicious Invectives contained in a late scurrilous Pamphlet, entitled Remarks on the Account, etc. In a Letter to the Noble Author of those Remarks."

The anger and worry caused by reading and answering the attacks made on her, had scarcely subsided when news was brought to the Duchess of Marlborough, that Her Grace of Buckingham, who had long divided the attention of the town with herself, was drawing near her last end, when pride, the ruling passion of her life, showed itself strongest at her death. For

the duchess now devoted all her time in devising the regal pomp and circumstance that must attend her to the grave. Her first care was to have a wax figure of herself made and magnificently dressed, which, after being exhibited at her own house, she desired to have placed in Westminster Abbey, as was then the custom with royalty. She next sent for John Anstis, Garter King-at-arms, to settle the ceremonial which would attend her burial. And one day when those around thought every moment would be her last, she suddenly asked, "Why won't they send the canopy of the funeral car for me to see? Let them send it though the tassels are not finished." Days passed and she still survived, thinking of nothing save vanity; and only a few hours before she quitted the world, she made her ladies-in-waiting vow to her, that if she should lie senseless, they would not sit down in the room before she was dead.

She died in March 1743.

It had at first been the poor lady's earnest desire that she should be laid in death beside the remains of James II., which, as already stated, were still above earth, awaiting their final resting place. But seeing the difficulties that prevented this wish from being carried out, she eventually consented to be interred in Westminster Abbey, where so many scions of her royal house slept in peace, and where she hoped her father would ultimately be removed.

It may be added that the body of the exiled King remained in the Church of the Benedictines in the

Faubourg St. Jacques, for nearly a century, where during all that time, candles were kept burning round it night and day—until the frenzied mob of the French Revolution broke into and desecrated the Church, and forced open the royal coffin. Then this howling, surging mob, defiant of all things sacred, glorying in profanity, breathing blasphemy, and longing for plunder, pressed forward with flaming eyes to see the perfectly preserved remains and shrunken yellow face of the King ; when swayed and chilled and frightened by some subtle mysterious feeling, they turned away and left him in peace.

The body was then taken possession of by the municipal authorities, whose officials reaped a profitable harvest by exhibiting it to the rabble for a few sous a head ; so that in death as in life, strange vicissitudes followed this unfortunate monarch. Ultimately, Robespierre directed that the remains should be buried, but the many and startling events that convulsed the country at this direful time, prevented his orders from being obeyed ; and it was not until 1813, when the Allies entered Paris, that by directions of George IV. the embalmed body of King James was with all becoming state removed from Paris and laid in the Church of St. Germain.

In June 1743, the Duke of Marlborough suddenly threw up his Court employments, in the hope, as Horace Walpole said, of reinstating himself in his grandmother's will. When told of his resignation the old duchess merely remarked, " It is very natural ; he

listed as soldiers do when they are drunk, and repented when he was sober."

As there seemed little sign of her relenting in his favour or relieving him of his debts, the duke begged John Scrope, secretary of the Treasury, who had become her correspondent and friend, to plead on his behalf with the dowager duchess. This John Scrope did with some caution but without much effect, for a few days afterwards she wrote to him saying: "When I saw you last you said something concerning the Duke of Marlborough, which occasions you this trouble, for you seem to have a good opinion of him and to wish that I would make him easy. This is to show you, that as to the good qualities you imagine he has, you are mistaken, and that it is impossible to make him easy. I will now give you the account of what has happened not long since."

She continued by saying that when he quitted all his employments, he wrote to tell her he had heard she approved of what he had done. "I answered this civilly," says the duchess, "saying that his behaviour to me had been so extraordinary for many years, I thought it necessary to have a year or two's experience how he would perform his great promises, and that I wished him very well. This was giving him hopes, though with the caution of a lawyer."

Soon after he began to treat, she says, with the Jews, and asked her to become one of his securities; on which as she states, "I gave him a grandmother's advice, telling him the vast sums he had taken up at

more than twenty per cent., were as well secured as when the people lent the money ; that I thought he would make a much better figure if he lived upon as little as he possibly could, than ever he had done in throwing away so much money, and let his creditors have all that was left out of his estate as far as it would go, and pay what more was due to them, when accidents or death increased his revenue, for I could not join in anything that would injure myself, or the settlement of his grandfather."

The duke then assured her he would rather starve than do anything she disapproved of, but a few days later he had mortgaged certain properties which he was to inherit at her death. "He has a great deal in him like his father," she comments, "but I cannot say he has any guilt, because he really does not know what is right and what is wrong, and will always change every three days what he designed, from the influence and flatteries of wretches who think of nothing but of getting something for themselves ; and if I should give him my whole estate he would throw it away as he has done his grandfather's ; and he would come at last to the Treasury for a pension for his vote. But I believe you have seen as well as I, that pensions and promises at Court are not ready money."

Even in the last year of her life this wonderful old woman, still mentally vigorous, occupied herself about business affairs, in writing her will and regulating her vast property, and in seeing her friends who found

her very communicative and entertaining on all topics save that touching on her relations with Queen Anne, whom she never mentioned disrespectfully.

It is probable that with the passage of years her vindictive feelings towards her former royal mistress and generous friend had softened ; that tolerance if not affection, had replaced the hatred which, on hearing of Her Majesty's death had made the duchess say, "Queen Anne died like a Roman, for her country's good." For after writing a spiteful "character" of her benefactress to be used in the "History of his own Times," which Bishop Burnet was writing, and that he, though anxious to oblige her grace had rejected, she raised a statue to Queen Anne, at Blenheim, on the pedestal of which she caused to be inscribed a laudatory tribute to Her Majesty's memory. It is however to be feared that this was done with a view to vexing a living queen as much as to praising a dead one ; for in the Coxe manuscripts a sentence referring to it says, "This character of Queen Anne is so much the reverse of Queen Caroline, that I think it will not be liked at Court."

In her latter days the duchess delighted in recalling the far removed years of her youth with their sudden uprise and rich rewards ; the swift political changes she had aided or witnessed ; and in dwelling on the inner histories of the Courts in which she had served, the intimate ways of royalties with whom she had associated, the courtiers who had been her contemporaries ; in all a grasping, scheming, sordid, paltry



crowd, whose burning ambitions and passions, whose triumphs, humiliations, or vexations, were now as toys that had dropped from the hands of sleepy children.

Lady Louisa Stuart says that in speaking of herself, the dowager duchess attempted no self-vindication, "but told facts just as they were, or as she believed them to be, with an openness and honesty that almost redeemed her faults; though this might partly proceed from never thinking herself in the wrong, or caring what was thought of her by others."

Almost daily she was carefully wrapped in shawls and wheeled in a chair about the grounds of whatever residence she occupied, whilst she beguiled her hours of loneliness by listening to a chamber organ that "could be performed by the most ignorant person," and was then thought one of the most wonderful inventions of the age. It had been brought from abroad and raffled for, royalty taking tickets, "instead of buying it," as the duchess said, and had been won by one from whom she purchased it for a thousand pounds, "an infinitely less sum than some bishopricks have been sold for," as she remarked. So for hours she listened to its eight tunes, and consoled herself by thinking she enjoyed the music more than if at an Italian opera or a fashionable assembly.

In September 1744, just a month before her death, she told a correspondent that she had entered "on a new business," which was the sorting, arranging, and tying up of bundles of papers and letters relating

to events in the lives of her husband and Lord Godolphin, as materials for a biography of the former. She enthusiastically declared that such a book would make "the most charming history that had ever yet been writ in any country," and she continues by saying, "I would rather if I were a man, have deserved to have such an account certified of me, as will be of the two lords that are mentioned, than have the greatest pension or estate settled on me."

Soon after the duke's death a paragraph in the *Weekly Journal*, stated, "It has been industriously reported that his grace has left the history of his life and actions in his own handwriting; which since his death have been put into the hands of Sir Richard Steele, in order to be published with all suitable decoration." Whatever foundation of truth this may have had, no life of the duke appeared until 1736, when a small volume, chiefly concerned with his grace's campaigns abroad, and giving little idea of the man outside his exploits as a soldier, was written by Thomas Lediard, who at various times had been attached to the duke's staff, and was secretary to His Majesty's envoy at Hamburg. That it did not satisfy the duchess is certain; for she was now determined that a full and detailed life of her husband should be given to the world.

To help her in this great undertaking she employed David Mallet and Richard Glover, who were more or less known as writers, ready to indite odes and dedications to lordly patrons, or ply their pens for or against

political men or schemes, for suitable considerations. David Mallet was a Scotchman belonging to the Macgregor clan, who began life as a tutor in the house of a great man; a bondage from which he escaped on making the acquaintance of James Thomson, author of "The Seasons." Instigated by his example, Mallet began to write odes and pastorals, and finally furnished the stage with two blank verse tragedies, *Eurydice* and *Mustapha*, each ponderous and pedantic. Both were produced at Drury Lane Theatre, when the latter met with such success that it ran for fourteen nights, chiefly because its high-flown sentences and long-winded speeches were directed against George II., and therefore patronised by his son Frederick Prince of Wales, between whom a bitter feud existed. As a reward for his offences against His Majesty, David Mallet was made under-secretary to the Prince, for which he received two hundred a year. It is also possible that for the same reason the dowager duchess, who likewise detested the King, selected this playwright as one of her husband's biographers.

Richard Glover, who was to collaborate with him, also laid claim to the title of poet; for at the age of sixteen he had written an ode to Sir Isaac Newton, and in 1737 a dull poem called "Leonidas"; which, though in blank verse and in nine books, was praised by good-natured Fielding, and ran into four editions. Its success was due to its being a manifesto against the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole, whose

opponents liberally subscribed for it. Mallet's enmity against Walpole, must have been a sufficient recommendation to the duchess, as a writer suitable for the task she required.

That Mallet and Glover began the work they were soon to abandon, is evident from her grace's letter to Mr. Scrope, in which she says, that though occasionally she suffered pain, she had been able to hear read, some of the letters intended for the Duke's biography. "And I hope" continues this old lady of eighty-four "I shall live long enough to assist the historians with all the assistance they can want from me ; I shall be content when I have done all in my power. Whenever the stroke comes I only pray that it may not be very painful, knowing that everybody must die ; and I think that whatever the next world is, it must be better than this, at least to those that never did deceive any mortal. I am very glad that you like what I am doing, and though you seem to laugh at my having vapours, I cannot help thinking you have them sometimes yourself, though you don't think it manly to complain.

"I send you a copy of a paper, which is all I have done yet with my historians. I have loads of papers in all my houses that I will gather together to inform them ; and I am sure that you will think, that never any two men deserved so well from their country as the Duke of Marlborough and my Lord Godolphin did."

The dowager duchess's hopes of seeing her husband's

biography finished, were never gratified ; for a few weeks after this letter was written, on October 18th, 1744, she died at Marlborough House. But little mention is made of the event in the newspapers of the day. The *General Advertiser* of the 19th says, "Yesterday morning at nine o'clock died at her house in St. James's Park, Her Grace the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough, in the eighty-fifth year of her age, being born on the 29th of May 1660 ; the Day of the Restoration of King Charles the Second to the Throne of these Realms." And the same paper of the 27th of October states, "On Wednesday next the corpse of the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough is to be carried from her house in St. James's, in a private manner to be interred at Blenheim."

Here after her long life of storm and stress she was laid to rest beside her husband.

According to the directions of her will, her funeral was private and conducted "with no more expense than decency requires" ; whilst mourning was not to be given to any one save those of her servants who attended the ceremony. To several of these, annuities were given. The bulk of her vast property, chiefly consisting of land which she had acquired since her husband's death, was left, not to her grandson Charles, second Duke of Marlborough, but to his brother and her favourite, Jack Spencer, on the condition that should he "become bound or surety for any person or persons whatever for any sum or sums of money, or if he or any person or persons in trust for him,

shall take from any king or queen of these realms any pension, or any office or employment, civil or military (except the rangership of the great or little parks at Windsor), then shall all these my intents and covenants in behalf of the said John Spencer become void, as if he were actually dead." In telling Lord Stair of this proviso at the time it was made, the duchess said she thought it ought to please everybody; "for it will secure my heirs in being very considerable men. None of them can put on a fool's coat, and take posts from soldiers of experience and service, who never did anything but kill pheasants and partridges."

To her only surviving daughter, Mary, Duchess of Montagu, she gave her gold snuff-box which had two portraits of the great duke when a youth; also the miniature painted of him by order of Queen Anne, and covered with a large diamond; together with two enamel pictures for a bracelet, of Lady Sunderland, and Lady Bridgewater. This must have seemed a small legacy compared with others left to strangers, such as twenty thousand pounds and her largest brilliant diamond ring to Philip Earl of Chesterfield, "out of the great regard she had for his merit, and the infinite obligations she had received from him"; and ten thousand pounds to William Pitt "upon account of his merit in the noble defence he made for the support of the laws of England, and to prevent the ruin of his country."

In a codicil of her will, she left five hundred pounds each to the men she had engaged to write her husband's

biography ; a work which was subject to conditions. "Her grace," says the paragraph referring to it, "desires Mr. Glover and Mr. Mallet may write the history of the Duke of Marlborough, that it may be known to the world how truly the late duke wished that justice should be done to all mankind, who, her grace was sure, left King James with great regret, and at a time when it was plain it was with hazard to himself ; and if he had been like the patriots of the present times, he might have been all that an ambitious man could have hoped for, by assisting King James to settle Popery in England. Her grace says she should be extremely obliged to the Earl of Chesterfield, who never had any call to give himself any trouble about her, if he would comply with her very earnest request, which is, that he will direct the two persons above mentioned, who are to write the said history, which she is extremely desirous should be well done. Her grace desires that no part of the said history be in verse ; and that it may not begin in the usual form of histories, but only from the Revolution. And she directs that the said history shall before it is printed, have the approbation of the Earl of Chesterfield and all her executors."

A copy of the duchess's will was printed in the newspapers of the day ; in referring to which Horace Walpole, in writing to Horace Mann, says, "You will see the particulars of old Marlborough's will in the *Evening Posts* of this week. It is as extravagant as one should have expected ; but I delight in her

begging that no part of the Duke of Marlborough's life may be written in verse by Glover and Mallet, to whom she gives five hundred pounds apiece for writing it in prose. There is a great deal of humour in the thought."

His grace's biography was never written by these authors. Glover resented the power vested in Lord Chesterfield, of revising his labours, and declared that "the capricious restrictions of the will compelled him to reject the undertaking." But David Mallet accepted his own and Glover's legacies, on the condition that he would write the life. That he was an unscrupulous man is proved by his selling for a hundred and fifty pounds to a publisher, and without their owner's knowledge, some letters entrusted to him by Lord Bolingbroke, to be used with advantage to his own character, in the biography of the duke; and by the base use he made of his supposed occupation to gain his own ends. An amusing illustration of this, which at the same time shows the inordinate vanity of a great actor, is given in Tom Davies' "Life of David Garrick."

According to this authority who knew both men, Mallet putting a copy of his new play *Elvira*, in his pocket, waited one day on Garrick, then manager of Drury Lane. Whilst anxious to have *Elvira* produced, Mallet feared lest a direct offer of it might be refused, as his former efforts at writing for the stage had not been profitable to the actor manager. However the playwright had carefully devised a plan by which he



hoped to gain the manager's favour, and presently on being asked by Garrick what had lately employed his talents, he answered that he was eternally fatigued in arranging materials for the life of the great Duke of Marlborough. All his nights and days were occupied with that history, "and you know Mr. Garrick, that it is a very bright and interesting period in the British annals. But hark you my friend," he continued, "Do you know I have found out a pretty snug niche for you in it?" Garrick's vanity at once flamed at the idea. "How, how's that? A niche for me?" said he, his eyes sparkling with pleasure. "How the devil could you bring me into the history of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough?" "Ah that is my business my dear friend," answered Mallet, "but I tell you I have done it." Hearing which Garrick said, "Well faith Mallet, you have the art of surprising your friends in the most unexpected and the politest manner. But why don't you, who are so well qualified, write something for the stage? You should relax. *Interpone tuis*. Ha you know, for I'm sure the theatre is a mere matter of diversion, a pleasure to you."

"Why faith," answered Mallet, "to tell you the truth I have, whenever I could rob the duke of an hour or so, employed myself in adapting La Motte's *Inès de Castro* to the English stage, and here it is." The manager took the play with every appearance of delight, and produced it, when it ran no longer than nine nights.

Writing fifteen years after the death of the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough, Horace Walpole states that

Mallet still defers publishing his life of the duke ; for sometimes he says he will wait till peace is proclaimed, and at others that he is translating it into French that he may have additional advantage from it. It seems strange that during all this time none of the duke's descendants was interested enough in the work to insist on its production, or even see to its progress ; for when Mallet died in 1765, it was found he had made no attempt to carry out his contract.

It was not until 1818, that an authentic life of the duke was written by William Coxe, Archdeacon of Wilts, who had been tutor to the then Duke of Marlborough, and who was furnished for his task as a biographer with the immense collection of papers and letters the duchess had arranged over seventy years previously ; the greater part of which he was unable to use, and that after her death passed into the possession of the British Museum. Other memoirs of the duke followed his conscientiously written but dull volumes, the most interesting and illuminating being the "Life of the Duke of Marlborough to the Accession of Queen Anne," by Lord Wolseley.

THE END.



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